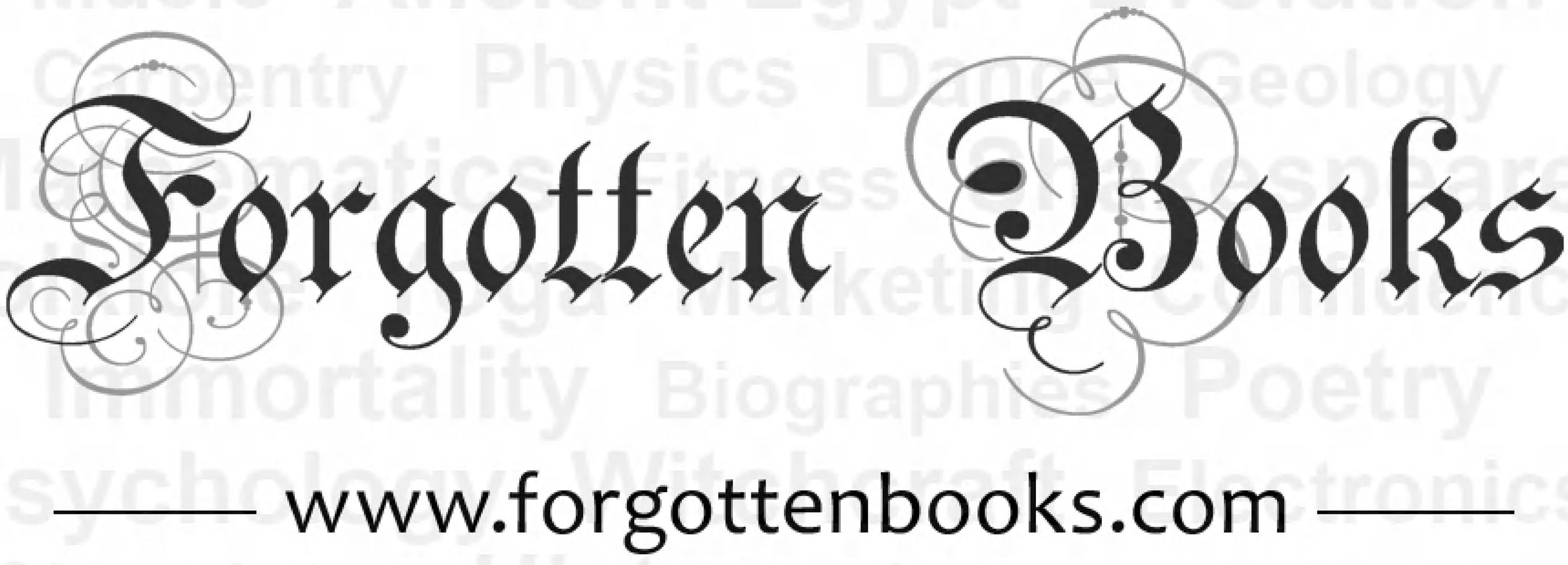


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A LAMP FOR THE READER.

The writings of Shakespeare, in addition to the more conspicuous graces of his language, are fraught with innumerable significant peculiarities, (unattempted, and probably unattainable by other authors) the offspring of his own transcendant genius only. These feats of phraseology, and achievements of expression, may appropriately be denominated *the illustrative mechanism of his composition.* Profusely employed throughout his wondrously-contrived dialogues, they are often treated as obscurities, because unappreciated; although, the principle of their application being recognized, they cast a brilliant and certain light upon his treasure-stored page. They constitute a system, in which the arrangement of the metre, the disposition of the prose, the form of a word, the duplication of the sense,—in which everything within the range of diction and construction is compelled, by the powers of a colossal intellect, to perform an extraordinary part in delineation.

In the subjoined narrative of a fight, the abrupt curtness of a verse brings the recital to a sudden check, where the progress of the combatant is temporarily arrested by the opposition of a potent foe; graphically imaging this phase of the action recounted, and indicating the fitting pause to be there observed by the narrator:

"For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smok'd with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion, carv'd out his passage
Till he fac'd the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th' chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements."

The vigour of life is here breathed into expression; the fiery indignation, which animates the speaker, blazing forth in his verbal imitation of the strife of which he tells.

And in the subsequently cited species of soliloquy, spoken, in prose, by Polonius, the method in which it is disposed (in the original folio of 1623) denotes the precise points of pause, together with the degree of their duration, proper to his contemplative and dubious manner of uttering it, whilst engaged in observing the motions of Hamlet:

"How pregnant sometimes his replies are!
A happiness
That often madness hits on,
Which reason and sanity could not
So prosperously be deliver'd of.
I will leave him,
And suddenly contrive the means of meeting,
Between him and my daughter.
My honourable lord, I will most humbly
Take my leave of you."

Here is appositely depicted the meditatively-interrupted delivery of the discomforted old man, as he fashions, to himself, this palliation for his own defeat in an endeavour to investigate the thoughts and motives of that adept in all colloquial subtlety, that master in the vocabulary of wit.

Thus, too, expedients of speech, trifling in appearance, but mighty in result (for any weapon is of weight in the hands of a Samson), are skilfully adapted to the paroxysms of passion, and to the vehemence of excited susceptibility. By the pluralizing or singularizing of a word, in a mode at variance with general custom, its effect is completely peculiarized; and it is qualified to fulfil, impressively, an unusual office. Its highly-dramatic efficiency in application may be partially estimated by the annexed passages; the foremost of which forms a portion of the agonized reflections of Macbeth, on the consequences of his consummated crime:

"If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace,
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,

To make them kings, the *seeds* of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance!"

The usurper, foreseeing that he has laboured to his own future and eternal destruction, only to confer the object of his ambition in perpetuity upon the race of his rival, dwells with maddening indignation upon this embittering sequel of his guilt; and seeks vent for the anguish of his impotent wrath, in representing the magnitude of the favour of fortune, whilst he detracts from the deserving of its recipients; in contrasting together the majesty of the acquisition, and the nothingness of those by whom it is destined to be attained. By multiplying the ordinary plurality of the term *seed*, it is rendered emphatically significant of *far-extended descents*, whilst it at the same time indicates, as emphatically, an insignificance of *individuality*, that perhaps no other word in the English language would have so scornfully expressed. And the violent feelings of the speaker are thus gathered and collected into utterance, as concentrated as the passion it depicts.

And when Miranda (in an early scene of The Tempest) has watched, with all-absorbing anxiety, the seeming destruction of the royal ship, she (by the simple use of the term *creature*, in the singular,) denotes her deduction that so fine a vessel had no doubt carried *some one personage* of more than common consequence and worth; and, at the same time, gives prominence to her somewhat abrupt transition of idea to lamenting the loss of the general crew, which expresses her troubled and compassionate emotion, with peculiar force and poetic beauty:

"A brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble *creature* in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perish'd."

In the Clown's song, which concludes the comedy of Twelfth Night, the unusual application of words in their plural form, presents (with buffoonery characteristic of the calling of the singer) the *repetition of an act* as a habit of the drunkard, together with the *duplication of objects* to a drunkard's vision, and the *indefinite and bewildering sensations* of a drunkard's head:

"But when I came unto my *beds*,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
With toss-pots still had drunken *heads*,
For the rain it raineth every day."

In Measure for Measure, Claudio (when excited by the apprehension of approaching death, and reviewing, in his shuddering fancy, the differing conditions of suffering to which the human soul might be finally condemned,) by limiting the term *region* to the singular, at once indicates how vividly present to him is the idea of being retained stationary *in one place*, bound by the thick-ribbed ice around; and enforces the antithesis subsequently suggested, of a violent and ceaseless transmission over all the portions of the terraqueous globe:

> "To reside
> In thrilling *region* of thick-ribbed ice;
> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world."

Prince Hal, (in King Henry IV.) whilst exulting with frolicsome merriment, in his successfully-executed jest of the robbery of Falstaff, and jeering at the lamenting object of the joke, humourously refers to Titan or the Sun, regretfully complaining, to Jupiter, of the loss of his son Phæton, by one of these eccentric pluralizations:

> "— pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the *sons*."

As the story is related *by* Titan, it is the tale of the *sun;* and as it is told *of* Phæton, it is the tale of the *son*. Hence the grief-stricken Titan is melted at the tale of the *sons*.

Further to enlarge this catalogue here, is unnecessary; but the same peculiarity is changefully adapted to form after form of individual feeling, and of mental operation.

The inexhaustible resources of the all-powerful dramatist rendered him prodigal of producing them; and words of multiplied meaning throng the passage of his thriftless pen. Thus the eagerness of solicitation, in Miranda, when supplicating her father in the cause of Ferdinand, is exhibited in a sentence of dexterously-doubled import, no less curiously subtle than it is exquisitely refined. It is constructed to touch even opposite sensations in the hearer, and so insure his acceptance of it in his most prevailing feeling:

> "O, dear father,
> Make not too *rash* a trial of him, for
> He's *gentle*, and not *fearful*."

Rash, bears here a double reference to Prospero and Ferdinand. And *gentle* and *fearful* are each used in their two senses of *noble* and *mild*, and *fearing* and *to be feared.* The appeal is made, by Miranda, upon the hostile attitude of Ferdinand when affronted, joined to his previously submissive deportment:—Do not *rashly* or imprudently make trial of him, *for your own sake*, for he is both *noble* and *fearless* (i. e. his high blood, and high courage, cannot patiently brook insult); and, Do not make too *rash* or hasty a trial of his disposition, *for his sake*, for he is *mild*, and not *to be feared* (i. e. altogether undeserving of outrage.)

The twofold character of terms, which abounds in the writings of Shakespeare, may often escape the notice of a reader unprepared for its constant recurrence; as in such instances as the following:

> " Their purpose is, to parle, to court, and dance;
> And every one his *love-feat* will advance
> Unto his several mistress."

The pun upon love-*feat* (love-*feet*) has relation to the *dance;* whilst the larger meaning of the sentence is, that every one will set forth, or display, for *love* of his mistress, whatsoever *feat* he can perform in the execution of the abovenamed several accomplishments.

The complicated play upon words is sometimes to be discovered only by a strict investigation of the design and intention of the speaker; as in the subsequent fragment of a dialogue, from the tragedy of Hamlet:

> " KING. But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—
> HAM. A little more than *kin*, and less than *kind.*
> KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
> HAM. Not so, my lord, I am too much *i' the sun.*"

The object of the usurping king in addressing his nephew as his *son*, is to elicit from him, in the hearing of the court, a real, or at least an apparent, concurrence in the position he assumes as his father; and Hamlet, who sees the intent, concentrates a murmured rejection of this claim of paternity, and an intimation of the unnatural treachery and selfishness of the project, into this singular play upon the near resemblance and distinguishing difference of the words *kin* and *kind.* He uses *kin* in its signification of *relationship*, and *kind* in the sense (then common to it) of *nature*, but also, adjectively, in that of *kindness;* and he remarks upon the salutation of his uncle, That it asserts too much of *relationship of blood*, and yet has less than the *fellowship of nature;* that although it adds a little too much to *kin*, it makes it less

than *kind* (kindness). His subsequent reply to the further address of the king has a similar drift: I am too much *o' the son*.

There are also, in endless profusion, sentences, to a careless or passing glance, simple and confined; but expanding into surpassing grandeur of glowing imagery, and extending indefinitely in scope and bearing, when submitted to the more prolonged contemplation of the peruser. Thus, when Isabel, in the growing ardour of dilating hope, exclaims, in her appeal to Angelo,

> "O, think on that;
> And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
> *Like man new made!*"

The signification stops not at the common interpretation, *Like an altogether altered man;* but its strength is in the suggestion it contains, of man, as at his earliest creation, reuttering the *breath of God himself*, then newly breathed into him,* and *retaining the loving qualities it had derived from its former possessor;* to whose ready propensity to forgiveness the supplicant has just referred. The sublimity and majesty of the conception is, like its comprehensiveness, boundless.

Again, in King Henry IV.:

> "And in the visitation of the winds,
> Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
> Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
> With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds,
> That, with the hurly, *death itself awakes*."

The concluding phrase of the foregoing passage is no vague or common-place exaggeration of speech; but it personifies *Death*, as aroused, by the gathering strife and tumult, to execute his office of taking life.

And if it be requisite for a due understanding of Shakesperian expressions to ascend into the sublimest regions of imagination, neither is it less necessary to visit, for explanation, the profoundest depths, the most essential sensations of the heart.

Thus the following sentence represents, in all concentration, the efforts of retiring conscience against the encroachments of advancing ill:

> "I am that way going to temptation,
> *Where prayers cross.*"

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* Genesis, c. ii., v. 7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.*"

That is, *where the prayer of the lips*, (preserve me from guilty desire) *and the prayer of the heart*, (permit it its indulgence) *cross or thwart each other*. Prayer is neutralized, and the sinner proceeds unobstructed upon his erring way.

Equally profound is the subsequent analysis of a murderer's sensations, upon the first conception of his crime.

> "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, (imaginary)
> Shakes so my *single* state of man,
> That function is smother'd in surmise."

Macbeth calls his existence, at this moment, his *single* state of man; because of the *two* faculties, *thought* and *action*, by which the life of man expresses itself, *the primitive or essential quality alone* is recognized by him; *action*, or function, being, as he says, extinguished by the violent agitation of the other power.

And when Prospero, in betrothing Miranda to Ferdinand, signifies that in so doing he relinquishes all that remains to him in life, he resolves it into the succeeding deeply-poetic phrase:

> "I
> Have given you here a *third* of mine own life,
> Or that for which I live."

Referring to the three divisions of time—past, present, and future—he intimates that in resigning his daughter, he gives away the *third* or *future* of his life, in giving that for which he lives.

Sometimes, though rarely, indignation is represented as finding utterance in the impulsive creation of its own expressions, formed on the suggestion of circumstance; as in the annexed passage from The Winter's Tale:

> "You are abus'd, and by some putter on,
> That will be damn'd for 't; would I knew the villain,
> I would *land-damn* him."

Here a new-formed term is presented, as originating in the impetuous sensations of an angry man; to whose vengeance the idea of future punishment by fire suggests a parallel to itself, in the immediate infliction upon his foe, of all the pains and penalties of *earth;* and who thus summarily signifies, I would make an *earthly hell* for him here.

Another species of peculiarity, and one that affords very efficacious assistance to interpretation, is the writer's practice of continuing a metaphor to an unprecedented

extent. This is well exemplified where Diana (in All's Well that Ends Well), rebuking Bertram for his illicit pursuit of her, answers,

> "I see that men *make ropes in such a scarre*
> That we'll forsake ourselves."

To make ropes in a scarre or rock, was, as the sentence imports, a proverbial saying, signifying (in allusion to the use of scaling-ladders) *to carry by assault a strong and defensible position.* And the lady consequently expresses, I see that men possess themselves of such fortresses only as we will ourselves abandon to them. In other words, you would persuade me to part with the protection of my virtue, that you may possess yourself of my person. The meaning is supported in a subsequent reply to Bertram, where she still pursues the idea:

> "Thus your own proper wisdom
> Brings in the champion, honour, on my part,
> *Against your vain assault.*"

Again, in the well-known soliloquy of Macbeth, when softened by the terrors of conscience, he recoils from the murder of Duncan:

> "That but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
> But here, upon this *bank* and *school* of time,
> We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
> We still have judgment here; that we but *teach*
> Bloody *instructions*," &c.

Bank is used for *bench*, and *time*, for *mortal life;* which, qualified as *a bench and school of instruction*, is placed in antithesis to *the life to come.* Here the idea of calling this life *the school of eternity*, as preparing man for the part he is to perform there, is not only thoroughly in accordance with the truthful genius of Shakespeare, but it is beautifully sustained in the expressions that follow it, "that we but *teach* bloody *instructions.*" The turn of Macbeth's thought is toward a comparison of the measured time in which, during childhood, we are fitted to fill well the indeterminate period of manhood; and the finite life of this world, in which we purchase for ourselves success or failure in an unlimited futurity. The feeling expressed is this: If here only, upon this bench of instruction, in this school of eternity, I could do this without bringing these, my pupil days, under suffering, I would hazard its effect on the endless life to come.

Beyond the circle of the sacred writers, there is not, perhaps, to be found a sentence appealing more irresistibly to the moral sense and apprehension of mankind, than this.

The term *bank*, was, possibly, anciently employed for the raised benches of a school; but the judicious selection of it here is, at all events, rendered evident, since it was used to indicate a bench occupied by many persons, placed one above another; as, "a *bank* of rowers." And the world, with its occupants of various orders, is the *bank* here *typified*.

And now, to readvert to a notable and all-important item in this inventory of poetic treasures, to which, already, a slight allusion has been made. It is the singular lot of Shakespeare to have fallen under an inexplicable misconception, in the universally prevailing notion that the earlier printers of his works have frequently divested his numbers of the more uniform regularity of versification, in which he is supposed to have produced them, and transformed them into lines of unprecedented measure, at variance with all the recognized methods of metrical arrangement. Whatever may be the grounds on which this conjecture of intrusion upon the dominion of poetry is based, it has been fatal to many of its most beautiful and unique effects. For every successive editor of the works of this mightiest dramatist has considered it incumbent upon his office to restore what, in his own individual opinion, constituted the original form and order of his author's matchless verse. Thus it has always been conceived necessary to disturb, in one way or another, the disposition or the metre of the following exquisite song.

"ARIEL. Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Court'sied when you have, and kiss'd,
(The wild waves whist,)
Foot it featly here and there, and sweet sprites bear
The burthen.
BURDEN (*dispersedly.*) Hark, hark! Bowgh, wowgh, the watch-dogs bark
Bowgh, wowgh,
ARIEL. Hark, hark! I hear the strain of strutting Chanticleer
Cry, cock-a-diddle-dow."

It affects to be an invitation to those "that on the sands, with printless foot do chase the ebbing Neptune," to come and dance upon the seashore. *To courtesy and to kiss*, were ceremonies that anciently appertained to particular dances. Thus, in King Henry VIII.:

"I were unmannerly to take you out,
And not to kiss you."

"The wild waves whist," or are silent, alludes to the cessation of the preceding storm, having rendered the sands proper for the proposed purpose. The sprites called upon to bear the burden, feign to hear the distant watch-dogs, which they imitate; and Ariel, in his turn, pretends to hear the cock, which he mimicks. *Dispersedly*, signifies that the voices which compose the chorus proceed from various points at the same time. And the original song being purposely constituted wildly irregular and studiously diversified, with a view of bewildering Ferdinand; and the strange fantastic qualities and interchange of elfish trickery which it exhibits, being given as characteristics of its assumed fairy origin, nothing of it ought ever to be in any degree modified or dispelled.

Ordinary hands might, with equal judgment, cast the graces of an antique bronze into a melter's furnace, and, retaining only the richly-compounded material of which it had been constructed, idly expect to remould it to a finer form.

The subjoined celebrated soliloquy of Lady Macbeth affords a still stronger instance of the injurious consequences of a rash interference, that would measure the operations of unparalleled genius by the inapplicable standard of inferior capacities. It is presented in the ancient folio, as follows:

"That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire:—
Hark! Peace! it was the owl, that shriek'd;
The fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good-night.
He is about it, the doors are open;
And the surfeited grooms do mock their charge
With snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live, or die."

She is here represented with every faculty stimulated to boldness by what she has drank; with every sense of soul and body incited to a particular purpose; and with every power of which she is possessed, concentrated in horrible watchfulness for any indication whatsoever, that this purpose is consummating. The mind, under such circumstances, seizes on each impression strongly and vividly, and imbibes the full spirit of its suggestion; but does so only to pass, in it, entirely from the contemplation of the individual fact, to consider the next incident presented to it. Every thing she

says is consequently uttered in detached sentences, as each thought is independent of that which preceded it. Her first presage of success is naturally derived from personal sensation. She has, at the same time and by the same method, nerved herself to her task, and unnerved opposition:

"That, which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire."

Her next exclamation has no relation at all to what has gone before. Her attentive ear is attracted by a sound. She anxiously detects its character,—

"Hark! Peace! it was the owl, that shriek'd;"

and draws from it a favourable deduction concerning that which absorbs her thoughts:

"The fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good-night."

That is, the good-night of death. This idea is also dismissed altogether for that which succeeds it, and which takes, in its turn, absolute possession:

"He is about it, the doors are open."

The doors of Duncan's apartments being open, is the signal to her that Macbeth has entered; and the two phrases that compose the verse are connected in a sense that runs hastily on:—He is about it, *as* the doors are open. Having satisfied herself of this, the subsequent line reveals another deduction drawn from another sound; viz., that being about it, he will meet with no interruption to its execution, for

"—the surfeited grooms do mock their charge
With snores."

She dwells slightly upon "*charge*," before uttering the two last words, because as this noise is not brief, like the cry of the owl, but continuous, she naturally listens to it with increased attention, the moment before pronouncing with certainty on its character. And this *rest*, together with the prolonged emphasis of satisfaction upon the word *snores*, when her conviction is confirmed, is indicated to the reader by the arrangement of the lines. The concluding sentence is delivered in exultation over thus-far success:

"I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live, or die."

Throughout this soliloquy, the language smoothly and evenly accords with the mental excitement of the speaker, endowing the whole with a spirit of harmony, in which the most fastidious ear may acquiesce with uninterrupted approbation; for as the mind necessarily dwells unequally, as regards duration, upon each varying thought to which circumstances give rise, they are appropriately couched in uneven phrases, to the intent that fitting pauses may be observed by the actor, and made without injury to the metre. Time has been marked with the most exquisite musical exactitude. The second verse is carefully adjusted to admit of the temporary arrest of the voice, by the cry of the owl—

"What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire:"

and the third to allow of the brief delays which naturally succeed to the exclamations of a listener—

"Hark! Peace! it was the owl, that shriek'd;

whilst the fourth is skilfully lengthened to suit the rapid utterance due to the exultant expression of an auspicious prognostication—

"The fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good-night."

The verses of Shakespeare were written expressly to be spoken; and they will be found complete teachers of elocution, with respect to his own compositions. They convey, in their division of the phrases and in their disposition of the thoughts expressed, direct and definite instructions to the actor, which, by any alteration of them whatsoever, is lost. Thus, the passage just referred to is commonly printed as follows:

"That, which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire:—Hark! Peace!
It was the owl, that shriek'd; the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live, or die."

To attain the appearance of more methodic versification, the mighty artist's own conception of the manner in which the speaker would utter it, is destroyed;—and, without his assistance, who can discover it with certainty? The glorious manifestation of unparalleled genius, which had contrived to set forth, to any ordinary effort

of contemplation, his own precise ideas on the recitation of his compositions, almost as distinctly as if himself spoke them to the ear, is blotted out;—and where is the capacity to discern it without his help? To disturb the measure of his verses, is to cancel intellectual achievements in this respect, that cannot be paralleled in the whole range of literature.

Passion and undeviating uniformity are not akin; and to write in the uninterrupted regularity of ordinary metre, accordingly, formed no part of the author's idea. He has written to the ear. The wind amongst the leaves of the forest, is not more musical than are his lines always, or more fitful and irregular than they are often. Instead of seeking conformity with the established rules of versification, he has invested himself with the sensations of the speakers, and "made the sound an echo to the sense," in degree, as in quality of tone. And whoever will bear in mind this characteristic of his compositions, and carry with him, to the study of it, the light of his author's conception on these points, will find the lines to be uniformly in such just accordance with the thoughts they reveal, and with each phasis of the action they delineate, as to constitute an index to every thing connected with their due expression; and that the original dialogues, throughout their entire length,—with their sudden checks, their deliberate pauses, their measured pronunciation, or hurried utterance, with all the many inequalities they exhibit,—are the very soul of melody, the quintessence of unadulterated harmony: and that Shakespeare has executed his versification, in a spirit learned and accomplished to the very summit of perfection in the art.

With a view of bringing every line, as nearly as possible, to an orthodox form, it has hitherto been an established practice, in printing the dramas of Shakespeare, so to arrange the concluding phrase of one speech and the commencement of the next as together constituting a verse. But the objects and feelings that actuate the characters in a play are commonly so opposite, or, at least, so dissimilar, as to hinder their amalgamating harmoniously in the same line, even where the syllabic measurement is correct; for the separate sensations expressed, thus introduced into it, would constantly destroy that concordance of tone and conjunction of sense, without which a verse cannot be possessed of perfect melody. And the check in time, occasioned by a transfer of the parts to different colloquists, would alone be sufficient to break its rhythm. If, for example, the following extract be spoken in the lingering accents that accord with the troubled sadness it indicates, its harmony is without a flaw:

"MACD. He is already nam'd, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

ROSSE. Where is Duncan's body?
MACD. Carried to Colme-kill;
The sacred store-house of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.
ROSSE. Will you to Scone?
MACD. No, cousin, I'll to Fife."

But if these sentences—

"To be invested.
Where is Duncan's body?
And guardian of their bones.
Will you to Scone?"—

thus severally united, as they usually are, be considered as verses, the transition from one sense to another is so absolute that rhythm is destroyed, and they have not, as verses, any harmony at all.

Avoiding such incongruity, the conclusions and commencements of consecutive speeches are, in the old copies, (faithful to the design of the writer) put as lines by themselves, and are so arranged as to harmonize (when judiciously uttered) with each other; by which disposition, the actor can never be betrayed into false elocution by the semblance of a verse such as was never intended, nor the exquisite euphony of the phraseology deteriorated.

If further argument be requisite to evince the intention of the author in this respect, it is abundantly furnished by the very few instances in which the sentiments of separate colloquists are purposely introduced into a single verse; for they are carefully printed, in the original folio, in the following manner:

"PROS. Dost thou forget
From what a torment I did free thee? ARI. No.
* * * * * *
PROS. They would not take her life: Is not this true? ARI. Ay, Sir.
* * * * * *
SEB. 'Save his majesty! ANT. Long live Gonzalo!"

And in these cases, the sense expressed is not only invariably such as blends without impediment, but it marks, also, that the answer is designedly put forth upon the interrogation, or that the one exclamation succeeds the other, with an unusual and instantaneous rapidity, through the eagerness or animation of the speakers.

An endeavour to specify the countless singularities that adorn the pages of Shakespeare, characterizing and distinguishing his genius from that of every writer, would be vain. The selection here arrayed presents but a scantily-collected sample of those illustrative properties of his composition, which, in brilliant profusion, bear witness at once to the fertility of his invention and to the unexampled delicacy of his execution. The capabilities of language appear boundless in his application of it; and graces, which step forth as but casual successes in the representations of lesser artists, constitute sustaining attributes of his. Nothing, perhaps, displays more largely how he luxuriated in plenitude of power, than his constantly-repeated practice of constructing his sentences in a fanciful allusion, altogether differing from their express purport. As when, in the upbraidings addressed by King Henry IV. to that sleep that has become a fugitive from his couch, in order to indicate an involuntary association of ideas in the mind of the royal soliloquizer, whose repose is interrupted by the rebellion of his subjects, the phraseology is fashioned to the notion of a *visitation* of justice, on a scene of tumult; *seizing* and *hanging* on high the *ruffians* of the riot:

> " And in the *visitation* of the winds,
> Who *take* the *ruffian* billows by the top,
> Curling their monstrous heads, and *hanging* them
> With deaf'ning clamours in the *slippery* clouds."

The epithet, *slippery*, glances at doubtful agents of authority, who permit offenders to escape; whilst its direct reference is to the effect produced by the distant billows of a stormy sea; each one in succession seeming to be suspended for a moment in the clouds, from which it presently glides again into the deep.

The path of Shakespeare is inaccessible to others, and can neither be comprehended by comparison, nor tracked by reference to rules. From himself only can an efficient clew be obtained, to discover the magnitude of his performances, or light, to discern their perfection; and in the recognition of his peculiarities consists one of the surest aids to the due appreciation of his productions. Endlessly multiplied as they are in kind, and modified in form, to give vigour and vitality to the delineation of every pictured emotion, they constitute a lamp for the reader, which diffuses refulgent brightness upon the inimitable conceptions of this mightiest of human intelligences.

MACBETH.

THE Tragedy of Macbeth was first printed in the folio of 1623; which has been the source of all the subsequent editions of this Play.

INTRODUCTION.

In the days of Shakespeare, the Chronicles from which the principal incidents in the tragedy of Macbeth are derived, were regarded as an authentic history. The existence and wickedness of witchcraft were believed and condemned by the legislature of the kingdom; the learned and unlearned lent an eager and credulous ear to narrations where much was effected by its interference; and to seek for a knowledge of the future, by means of supernatural agencies, was an act of no uncommon occurrence. By including witches, therefore, amongst the personages of his drama, the author has brought prominently forward one of the influences which performed its own peculiar part in the production of the public disposition that characterized his time.

Differing altogether from the magician, they were supposed, as King James relates in his treatise on "Demonologie," to obey the devil, not to command him; and the penetrating glance of Shakespeare has perceived that were beings of such supernatural powers in wickedness, as were by law and opinion imputed to them, to exist at all, it must be by the consignment of their entire faculties to the constant practice of malice and of wrong; since they would perpetually betray their total subjection to the evil nature to which they had sold themselves, and which they had selected to serve. From their first introduction to their latest exit, they are accordingly depicted as rancorous intruders into the affairs of others. "Juggling fiends," whose promises are made to ruin, not to enrich; beings animated by a spirit of evil, cruel and unremittent; tempting others to the committal of iniquity, and tempting only to betray. To the law which denounced them, he thus held up the mirror of what alone it could with justice condemn; to those who sought their counsel, he shewed the tendency of the advice they would receive. He has skilfully collected together the commonly-accepted characteristics of the class, into a consistent and concentrated representation

of the nature of witchcraft, exercised according to the attributes ascribed to it by the age. Every portion of the detail introduced concerning it was then matter of popular belief; the allusions, literal and metaphorical, with which the text is illustrated, relate to subjects with which his audience were familiar; and he has, throughout the whole play, made the story of a past period the medium of an instructive exhibition of the general spirit, in which such things as are there treated of were professedly viewed and thought on in that in which himself lived.

Any analysis of the inferior characters who compose the drama would be superfluous. They severally go forward upon the impulse of motives, set in so clear a light by the resplendent faculties that have given them being, as to be easily and distinctly apparent to moderately-discerning observation. With regard to Macbeth himself, his wife puts into the hand of the reader a very tangible clew to the discovery of his disposition:

> "Yet do I fear thy nature;
> 'Tis too full o' the milk of human kindness,
> To catch the nearest way: Thou would'st be great;
> Art not without ambition; but without
> The illness should attend it. What thou would'st highly, (ambitiously)
> That would'st thou holily; would'st not play false,
> And yet would'st wrongly win:
> Thou 'd'st have, great Glamis, that which cries,
> 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it:'
> And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
> Than wishest should be undone."

To her first glance, the ordinary kindness and integrity of his temper naturally seem to stand in unaided dignity: but, as her cogitation dwells upon his attributes, she gradually recognizes his virtue as dependant on his mental timidity; and evil, which is excluded from the commencement of this catalogue of his characteristics, becomes, in the conclusion of her apostrophe,

> "That which rather thou dost *fear to do*,
> *Than wishest* should be *undone*."

His whole career is an undeviating exposition of this text. His ruling passion is *ambition;* his governing sensation is *spiritual fear*. All his desires originate in the former, and all his performance is subjected to the dominion of the latter. No sooner has the partial fulfilment of a felicitous prophesy given him the presentiment

of safety, in success, than murder is the readiest offspring of his imagination, as the means of attaining it. The temporary extinction of his *fear* is proportionally mortal to his *honesty*. But determination in execution, he has not. When the moment for the consummation of his project is present to him,—when the blow is to be struck,—*dread* of the consequences to himself is *suggestive of pity* for the gracious Duncan, and stops his hand. "*I dare not*," begets the *kindness* that bars "the nearest way" to his desires. Lady Macbeth "pours her spirits in his ear," and in her valour he removes "all that impedes him from the golden round" he coveted.

From his *principles* she never afterwards looks for opposition, neither from them does she ever find it. All her taunts, all her arguments, are addressed to the subduing of his *fear*. And *this*, which had been the main prop of his virtues whilst they stood up, presses upon them to their entire annihilation when they have fallen down. It is henceforth the acknowledged instigator, the avowed inducement, to all his crimes; the frightful impulse to his every action. "Our *fears* in Banquo, stick deep." "There is none but he, whose being I do *fear*." Yet the name of Macduff, is afterwards greeted with no less:

> "Thou shalt not live;
> That I may tell pale-hearted *fear* it lies."

Striving in the madness of *fear* to escape the doom of a murderer, he is yet haunted by the indelible impression that to do so is physically impossible:

> "It will have blood, they say;
> Blood will have blood:
> Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
> Augurs, and understood relations, have
> By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood."

Agents, in themselves unintelligible to man, have, through the interpretation of intelligible relations with him, unearthed the secret, and denounced the homicide.

At bed and at board he is goaded by the tyranny of this terror, the perpetual presence of which is intolerable to him:

> "But let the frame of things disjoint,
> Both the worlds suffer,
> Ere we will eat our meal in *fear*, and sleep
> In the affliction of these terrible dreams,
> That *shake us* nightly."

His constant struggle is to free himself from the grasp it has fixed upon him, whilst it ceaselessly hurries him on its blind and furious course.

"Now am I bent to know
By the worst means, the worst."
"For mine own good,
All causes shall give way."

Such is the incitement by which he acts. He strikes, almost indiscriminately, at women, at children, at whatever by its motion catches his fearful eye; his own terror and distraction augmenting at every blow. Audacious only upon equivocating prophesies which never sustain his audacity, with the boastings of indomitable daring upon his tongue, the mere token of danger counsels him to fear:

"The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sag with doubt, *nor shake with fear.*"
* * * * * *
"Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine,
Are counsellors to fear."

A moral apprehension that his committal of evil against others will assuredly bring evil upon himself, overtops all the physical boldness of his nature; and, conscious that all interests are provoked to enmity against him, the satisfied courage which had borne him steadily forward in rightful fight has changed into irresolution and despair:

"There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone."

He thus resolves into a single sentence the material of his terror-blasted life:

"It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

With admirable art, the character of Lady Macbeth is contrasted with that of her confederate in guilt; the opposite qualities of each being developed and made more apparent by their contact. For her imperturbable hardihood is tested to the utmost by the perpetual ill-boding suggestions of his apprehensions; and all the exertions of her resolution are powerless to repress the vaccillations of his unstable and fear-

stricken mind. Both are cast into irremediable misery, under the baleful influence of crime; but the different dispositions of each are distinguished during the dissolution of their greatness, by the silent breaking of the one, and by the noisy strivings of the other to exclude the resistless intrusion of ever-augmenting despair.

The thoughts and actions of the various personages who fill, with Macbeth, the scene, circulate unceasingly around him. He is at once the cause and object of them all. Men are scattered in seeking safety from his blow; they come together again, to prevent the renewal of it. They step backward, as it were, from the first sweep of his sword, because its stroke is sudden and unexpected; and their next movement is a forward one, upon his life. Distance does not operate with the effect of space, so to separate the agents of the plot, as to put them out of sight; it merely places them beyond the fingers' ends,—only sufficiently removes them from the murderous grasp of Macbeth, whilst he continues to stand the visible centre of their action. *Their* removal serves only to shew truly *his* natural position. Nothing could be more skilfully or artistically arranged, to place the whole conception of the author at once within the sphere of common capacity, or to maintain the continuity of its incidents undisturbed by far-divided localities, or by gaps and incongruities of time. Nothing intervenes to sever the thread of the narration, or to interrupt the impression the story was constructed to convey.

The earliest record of the appearance of this play, is derived from Dr. Samuel Forman's Diary, preserved in the Ashmolean Museum; he having, as it is there stated, witnessed its performance at the Globe Theatre on the 20th of April, 1610. But its first representation was probably earlier; and Malone conjectured, after considerable examination, that it was about 1606.

To avoid the perpetual intersection of the text, by letters or figures of reference, the lines of the play have been numbered on the margin of the page; and the reader who seeks explanation of an obscure or doubtful passage, must refer to the foot-notes, by the number of the line containing it.

PERSONAGES OF THE DRAMA.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.

MAICOIM, DONALBAIN, } his Sons.

MACBETH, BANQUO, } Generals of his Army.

MACDUFF, IENOX, ROSSE, MENTETH, ANGUS, CATHNESS, } Thanes of Scotland.

FIEANCE, Son to Banquo.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, General of the English Forces.

Young SIWARD, his Son.

SEYTON, an Officer attending Macbeth.

Son to Macduff.

An English Doctor. A Scotch Doctor.

A Soldier. A Porter. An old Man.

IADY MACBETH.

IADY MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending Iady Macbeth.

HECATE, and Witches.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers.

The Ghost of Banquo, and other Apparitions.

SCENE, in the end of the fourth Act, in England; through the rest of the Play in Scotland.

MACBETH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An open Place.

Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.

1 *Witch.* When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
2 *Witch.* When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won:
3 *Witch.* That will be ere the set of sun.
1 *Witch.* Where the place?
2 *Witch.* Upon the heath:
3 *Witch.* There to meet with Macbeth.

l. 1. When shall we three meet again, &c.] The play commences with singular spirit, by fully disclosing, in a few lines, that malignant disposition which is the principal characteristic of the witches. They encounter each other as they are hurrying to contemplate the effects of elemental fury and human violence; for it is apparent, in the style of their questions and replies, that the several events of which they speak are, from the first, known to all of them. Their brief dialogue is a series of *congratulatory ejaculations*, because they are thus auspiciously come together beneath a sky, *favourable to themselves, as it is threatening and hostile to others;* because they will yet again meet amidst the still more congenial *consequences* of *storm and strife*, and that *before the close of the passing day;* and favoured by the desolation of the blasted *heath*, will there meet with *Macbeth*, an apt and powerful instrument of harm. Thus brought to the height of ecstacy, they exultingly proclaim themselves, in their parting exclamation, such as take *good for evil, and evil for good;* for the phrase, "Fair is foul," &c., includes this moral sense, in addition to its literal reference to the *tempestuous weather*, as being propitious (for such was the belief of the time) to works of witchcraft. Their announcement, also, that a battle is in progress affecting the story of the play, and their mysterious mention of Macbeth, carry with them a thrilling interest which is the product of consummate dramatic skill.

1 *Witch.* I come, Graymalkin!
All. Paddock calls: Anon. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Witches vanish.*

SCENE II.

A Camp near Fores.

Alarum within. Enter King DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENOX, *with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Soldier.*

Dun. What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.
Mal. This is the sergeant,
Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought
'Gainst my captivity:—Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil,
As thou didst leave it.

GRAYMALKIN is a *cat*, and PADDOCK a *toad*; both formerly supposed to be familiars of the witches, who here reply to the *cry* of the one and to the *croaking* of the other; and these various concomitants of the scene, added to the corresponding wildness of the chant in which the dialogue is conducted, enhance to the utmost the mystic sensation that the whole was devised to produce. The last line but one, *where the exclamation becomes general*, is designedly made of great length; indicating that it is spoken with breathless rapidity, significative of the bustling delirium of triumph into which the speakers are wrought by the sounds that have summoned them, and by the expectancy awakened by the course and character of their colloquy; whilst the last line is brought into unison with it by an exultant prolongation of the concluding word *air*, (as far as the exhalation of a full-drawn breath will permit) to suit the motion of ascending into it. And the modern division of the one line into two, tames down the conception of the author, by enfeebling the expression of this natural increase of wicked excitement.

l. 12. What bloody man is that?] The action of the piece is here carefully united with the preceding scene. The witches have there told that *a battle* is in act, in which they are interested, and have hinted at the importance of *Macbeth* in the unfolding story; and the first natural agents who appear upon the stage are engrossed in the result of the *contest*, and tell that the hero of it is *Macbeth*. The strained expectancy of Duncan, that makes him view the sudden apparition of the "bloody man," only as a source of information concerning the fight on which his kingdom's fate is suspended; Malcolm's grateful and eager recognition of the sergeant whose saving assistance had rescued him from the clutches of his foes; the strong excitement which enables the wounded soldier

Sold. Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together,
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald
(Worthy to be a rebel; for to that,
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him,) from the western isles
Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is suppli'd;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: But all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name,)
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smok'd with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion, carv'd out his passage,

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to relate, more forcefully than with the strength of health, the events of the day, only to sink exhausted, when that excitement dies away with the ending of his tale;—all has the vigorous continuity of real life, and is fitted to rivet the attention of spectators to the stage.

l. 26. Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is suppli'd.] *Of* and *with* were formerly used indiscriminately. Thus, in Grimoald's Poems, Warton's "History of Poetry," vol. iii. p. 68:

"——— what yere
Of plenty stord."

Kernes and Gallowglasses were a low order of marauding soldiers. A detailed description of them is given in Riche's "New Irish Prognostication," 1624; cited by Boswell.

l. 27. And fortune on his damned QUARREL smiling.] Instead of *quarrel*, the old copy has *quarry*; but this the sentence itself demonstrates a misprint; for during that particular condition of the fight, that the sergeant is describing, fortune smiled, not upon Macdonwald's *quarry*, which would necessarily denote his foe, but upon his *quarrel* only; and the deceitful smile that she thus bestowed upon an *illegal cause*, calls forth the aptly opprobrious title that is applied to her. Endeavours have been made to vindicate the retention of the word *quarry* in the text by interpreting *damned* as *doomed*; but no qualification that epithets can supply could justify the denomination of Macdonwald's army as *his own quarry*. Moreover, the phrase, "*but all's too weak*," implies how potent was the character of the strength described as baffled by Macbeth; and the designation of this as previously *doomed*, or *rendered physically incapable of ultimate success*, would consequently have deprived this passage of its force. Besides which, the sergeant is giving the fullest colouring to the triumphant position of the rebels before he reverses the picture; and to have partially forestalled this reversal by applying to them such an appellation as *quarry*, or such a qualification as *doomed*, would have broken his intended antithesis and blunted the point of his method of narrating. Holinshed makes use of the term *quarrel* in relating this very fact: "Out of the westerne Iles there came unto him a great multitude of people, offering themselves to assist him in that rebellious *quarrel*."

Till he fac'd the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th' chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.
Dun. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!
Sold. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break;
So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping Kernes to trust their heels;
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms, and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.
Dun. Dismay'd not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Sold. Yes, as sparrows, eagles;
Or the hare, the lion.

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l. 34. WHICH ne'er shook hands,] *Which* is used as *who*; and refers not to its seeming antecedent, "*slave*," but to "*he*" (Macbeth.) Another example of this construction occurs in A. ii., sc. 1.

l. 39. SHIPWRACKING storms and direful thunders BREAK;] The ancient orthography of the word *wreck* is retained throughout the play, for the sake of uniformity, since it represents the pronunciation of the time, which renders its preservation compulsory in a subsequent passage, where the term is made to constitute one of the rhymes of a couplet:

"Blow, wind! come, *wrack!*
At least we'll die with harness on our back."

The word *break* is not inserted in the first folio, and the second adds *breaking*. The present emendation was made by Pope.

l. 40. So from that spring, whence comfort seemed to come, &c.] The term *storms*, in the preceding line, here gives birth to the aptly significant idea of *a spring that had brought only comfort, swelling into a destructive flood*; instancing how a casual word can suggest to the author the metaphor that will most effectually express what the progress of the dialogue requires.

l. 47. Dismay'd not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?] The Alexandrine line is here introduced to suit *the slackened delivery of dejection*, in opposition to the *more rapid exclamation of joyous admiration* to which Duncan has just before given utterance: whilst it, at the same time, denotes (for to preserve the full music of the verse, it must be spoken without stop) that the anxiety of the speaker forbids him to pause in his question.

l. 48. Yes, as sparrows, eagles;] This and the succeeding line are, in modern editions, printed as one; in which form they indicate the energetically redoubled expression of nervous animation; whereas they are intended to signify, in their division, the failing powers of the

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks;
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe;
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—but I am faint,
My gashes cry for help.

Dun. So well thy words become thee, as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both:—Go, get him surgeons.

[*Exit Soldier, attended.*

Enter Rosse *and* Angus.

Who comes here?

Mal. The worthy thane of Rosse.

Len. What a haste looks through his eyes!
So should he look, that seems to speak things strange.

Rosse. God save the king!

Dun. Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

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speaker, who lingers upon each idea, and pauses painfully in his speech, exhausted by his previous exertion, until he is newly aroused to greater vivacity, by the warlike character of his own images, which infuse into him a momentary and deceptive strength, in the exercise of which he faints. Sensible that he is swooning, he breaks abruptly off at, "I cannot tell;" this sentence, too, displaying the effort of a mind failing in its strength, and unable either to detach its thoughts from the bloody scenes upon which they have been busied, or to distinguish and to grasp his full point and purpose. "*But I am faint,*" is also usually made part of the next line to that in which it is here placed. In the original folio, it stands as above; denoting that the soldier quits his narration suddenly, and very hastily asks for help, aware that insensibility is overcoming his faculties. Alterations that efface the expression of any of these varied changes and sensations, detract proportionally from the dramatic efficiency and vivid reality of the delineation.

Enter Rosse and Angus.] This is the old stage direction, from which the name of *Angus* is sometimes excluded in later editions, because he neither speaks nor is spoken to. But that the whole attention of Duncan, Malcolm, and Lenox should remain so engrossed in Rosse who first enters and first attracts it by his tale, as to make them unobservant of the presence of Angus, serves to display the intense interest which possesses them. And it is a trait of life that ought not to be expunged by the omission of Angus, more especially as he subsequently goes with Rosse to execute the commission here given them to perform.

l. 62. So should he look, that seems to speak things strange.] This alludes to the haste expressed in the countenance of the messenger; and signifies, *Such is the aspect of one whose very look seems to tell strange tidings.*

Rosse. From Fife, great king,
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky,
And fan our people cold.
Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: And, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.
Dun. Great happiness!
Rosse. That now, Sweno, the Norways' king,
Craves composition;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men,
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colmes' inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.
Dun. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest:—Go, pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.
Rosse. I'll see it done.
Dun. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. [*Exeunt.*

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l. 66. Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky,
And fan our people cold.] Rosse, like the sergeant, describes the previous advantages of the rebels in the present tense, in order to set the royal victory in the strongest light of achievement. The Norweyan banners *flout* or *insult* the sky, whilst raised in the pride of expected victory. It refers to the bold display of *lawless ensigns* in the *face of heaven*. "*And fan our people cold*," is metaphorically used for *chill them with apprehension*.

l. 71. —BELLONA'S BRIDEGROOM.] *Macbeth.*

l. 72. Confronted him with SELF-COMPARISONS.] Confronted him by comparing or measuring himself with him (Norway) in strict opposition, in arms and action; viz., point to point, and assailing arm to arm.

l. 77. That now, Sweno, the Norways' king,
Craves composition;] The original arrangement of these lines has been commonly abandoned for the following:

"That now,
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition."

But there is no rest in the sense at *now*. The division of ideas is at *king*. Rosse first defines the person, and then tells his act. Besides, he designedly isolates the concluding phrase, and bestows upon it a prolonged and triumphant emphasis, in order to announce the declaration of submission with full effect.

SCENE III.

A Heath.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 *Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?
2 *Witch.* Killing swine.
3 *Witch.* Sister, where thou?

1 *Witch.* A Sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd:
"Give me," quoth I:
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
2 *Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.
1 *Witch.* Th' art kind.
3 *Witch.* And I another.
1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other;

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l. 88. Killing swine.] To infect the swine of such as had offended them, was formerly thought to be a frequent method of a witch's revenge. Thus, in "The Witch," by Middleton:

"Now I'll be meete with 'em;
Seven of their yong *piggs* I have be-witched already."

l. 93. Aroint thee, witch! the rump-fed ronyon cries.] *Aroint*, means *begone*. *Rump-fed*, is *fed on offal*. A *ronyon* is one who has the *scab* or *scurvy*. Fr. rogneux.

l. 95. But in a sieve I'll thither sail,] Witches were supposed to use this mode of transport upon water. In a pamphlet entitled "Newes from Scotland," cited by Mr. Steevens, it is told of a company of witches, "that all they together went to sea, each one in a *riddle*, or *cive*."

l. 96. And, like a rat without a tail,] It was the belief of the times, that though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the tail would still be wanting.—*Steevens*.

l. 101. I myself have all the other;] According to ancient superstition, witches held possession of three winds, which, being tied in bags with three knots, enabled them to secure a successful voyage. The first to be unknit when they set sail, the second at sea, but the third not at all, for it included a contrary tempest. (See Sandys' "Ovid," p. 133.) Hence she here speaks of *the three winds* as commanding all the points of the compass, and sufficing for all her purposes.

And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall, neither night nor day,
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary sev'n-nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.
Look what I have.

2 Witch. Show me, show me.

1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrack'd, as homeward he did come. [*Drum within.*

3 Witch. A drum, a drum;
Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about;

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l. 102. And the VERY ports they BLOW,] i. e., the *exact* ports they *blow upon*. And "all the quarters that they know," means, all the points they *blow from*.

l. 104. The shipman's CARD.] That is, the lines of the compass, as marked on a sea-chart. Thus, in Burton's Anat. of Melan. vol. i. p. 157: "—as the lines of several *sea-cards* cut each other in a globe or map."

l. 108. — a man FORBID:] A man *interdicted* or *accursed*.

l. 110. Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:] Stat. 5 Elizab. c. 16, rendered it punishable to practise any witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby any one should be *wasted*, *consumed*, or lamed in body or member.

l. 119. THE WEIRD SISTERS,] This phrase was formerly applied to the Parca or Fates; and it here signifies, by analogy, *prophetic sisters*, or *such as announce the decrees of fate*; a qualification they are upon the point of exercising as regards Macbeth. In the "Birth of St. George," old Ballad, the word *weird* also occurs in the sense of *prophetic*:

"To the *weird* lady of the woods,
Full long and many a daye,
Thro' lonely shades and thickets rough,
He winds his weary waye."

The magic dance, here performed by the witches, together with the tone and character of the accompanying incantation, are forcibly expressive of their malignant exultation at the approach of their victim, and their sense that he is entering within the influence of their spells.

Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine:
Peace!—the charm's wound up.

Enter Macbeth *and* Banquo.

Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.
Ban. How far is't call'd to Fores?—What are these,
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire;
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips:—You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.
Macb. Speak if you can;—What are you?
1 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
2 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
3 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter.
Ban. Good Sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?—I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having, and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal; to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,

---

l. 125. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.] i. e., *Foul* with regard to the *weather*, and *fair* with reference to his *victory*. The remark is doubtless intended to be drawn from Macbeth at this precise moment, by a sudden increase in the violence of the tempest, at the instant of his meeting with the witches, who were supposed to exercise great power over the elements.

l. 133. — your BEARDS] Witches were anciently believed to have hair on their chins. Thus, Burton, in his Anat. of Melan. vol. ii., p. 314, speaks of "*a witche's beard.*"

l. 141. Are ye FANTASTICAL,] *Imaginary*, or *creatures of fantasy*. So, in "All's Lost by Lust," 1613:

"— or is that thing
Which would supply the place of soul in thee,
Merely *phantastical*?"

l. 144. Of noble HAVING,] *Possession*. So, in "Twelfth Night:" "my *having* is not much."

And say, which grain will grow, and which will not;
Speak then to me, who neither beg, nor fear,
Your favours, nor your hate.
1 *Witch*. Hail!
2 *Witch*. Hail!
3 *Witch*. Hail!
1 *Witch*. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
2 *Witch*. Not so happy, yet much happier.
3 *Witch*. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
1 *Witch*. Banquo, and Macbeth, all hail!
Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death, I know, I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and, to be king,
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting?
Speak, I charge you. [*Witches vanish.*
Ban. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them:—Whither are they vanish'd?
Macb. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal

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l. 159. By Sinel's death,] Sinel was the father of Macbeth.

l. 170. — and what seem'd corporal,
Melted as breath into the wind.
Would they had staid!] The word *melted* is commonly transferred to the line preceding that in which it is here placed:

"— and what seem'd corporal, melted."

But the emphasis should be laid upon "*seem'd*," and the division of ideas is at "*corporal*," and there the rest should be made by the speaker; for the mind dwells first on the *seeming materiality*, and then turns to the antithesis of *invisibility*. "*Melted*," consequently belongs to the second line of the speech, which is uttered in the accents of wonder and with a rapidity illustrative of the act it describes. The metre is completed in both cases by the pause of contemplation, in which intense astonishment holds the narrator upon each phase of the mysterious incident, as imagination recalls it to his view. "*Would they had staid!*" is an added idea, originating in the desire to question further those who had, by this method of departing, proved their supernatural character. Instead,

Melted as breath into the wind.
Would they had staid!
Ban. Were such things here, as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root,
That takes the reason prisoner?
Macb. Your children shall be kings.
Ban. You shall be king.
Macb. And thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?
Ban. To th' self-same tune, and words. Who's here?

Enter Rosse *and* Angus.

Rosse. The king hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend,
Which should be thine, or his: Silenc'd with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' th' self-same day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,

---

therefore, of making part (as it is usually made to do) of the verse here preceding it, it stands, in the original folio, as in the text above; suggesting, by its isolation, a considerable pause before it, as the anxious wish it expresses is the result of temporary meditation on what has occurred.

l. 174. Or have we EATEN ON the INSANE ROOT,] *Eaten on* is an ancient idiom. Thus, in Ray's Proverbs: "He that *bites on* every weed must needs light on poison." The *insane root* is either *henbane* or *hemlock*. Both of these herbs were believed to affect the reason. *Henbane* is called *insana* by Batman, "Uppon Bartholome de propriet. rerum, lib. xvii., ch. 87, cited by Mr. Douce: and *hemlock* is referred to as follows, in Green's "Never too late," 1616, quoted by Mr. Steevens: "— else you have *eaten of the roots of hemlock*, that makes men's eyes *conceit unseen objects*."

l. 183. His wonders and his praises do contend,
Which should be thine or his:] His *wonders* and his *praises* maintain a contention whether *he* should be more actuated *by*, or *you* more the object *of*, his *wonders* or his *commendations*. That is, which of the two it most befits *him to give*, or *you to excite*. The two words are used in the plural, to indicate more strongly the repeated excitation of the separate sensations of *astonishment* and *approbation*.

l. 184. — Silenc'd with that,] Silenced with that contention;—withheld from expressing either, by the strife of these conflicting feelings.

Strange images of death. As thick as hail,
Came post with post; and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.
Ang. We are sent,
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.
Rosse. And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor:
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.
Ban. What, can the devil speak true?
Macb. The thane of Cawdor lives;
Why do you dress me in borrow'd robes?

---

l. 188. "— As thick as HAIL,
Came post with post;] This passage stands, in the original copy, thus:

"As thick as *Tale*
Can post with post."

The impression that the speaker would convey is, that the incessant exploits of Macbeth had so continuously diminished the advantages of the rebel army, that messengers had been sent to Duncan in such quick succession as to arrive before him, many together. And the meaning deduced by Dr. Johnson from the ancient sentence is, "Posts arrived as fast as they could be *counted*." But, independently of the improbable tameness of any one under such circumstances of excitement bethinking himself of counting the messengers, the word *tale* is a *noun*, and must be interpreted accordingly. The phrase would consequently be, Posts arrived as fast as *account*; and nothing more is necessary for the overthrow of Johnson's solution. Rowe conjectured the old text to be a misprint of the proverbial simile, *as thick as hail*; and to those who have noted Shakespeare's habit of continuing the mode of expression suggested by his metaphors or similes, even to a considerable distance from those figures of speech, there is, in the concluding line of the paragraph, a complete proof that this emendation is correct:

"And *pour'd them down* before him."

The connection of thought is here obvious. The messengers, arrived at their goal, discharged themselves of their news, as melting hail pours forth its waters. The alteration of *Can* into *Came* is a correction requiring no comment.

l. 201. The thane of Cawdor lives:
Why do you dress me in borrow'd
robes?] The original metre is thus arranged to denote the pause which the speaker would naturally make upon an assertion of surprise, as upon it he would necessarily dwell impressively; and it is by this that the rhythm is perfected. "*Why do you dress me in borrow'd robes?*" is a separate idea arising out of the previous assumption; and as it ought, by its

Ang. Who was the thane, lives yet;
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose.
Whether he was combin'd with those of Norway;
Or did line the rebel with hidden help
And vantage; or that with both he labour'd
In his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.
Macb. Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind.—Thanks for your pains.
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me,
Promis'd no less to them?
Ban. That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.—
Cousins, a word, I pray you.
Macb. Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good:
If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,

---

nature, to be spoken in the rapid accents due to an expostulation of wonder, it cannot, by the unnatural division commonly made in it, constitute a verse in its true utterance:

"The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?"

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man,
That function is smother'd in surmise;
And nothing is, but what is not.

Ban. Look, how our partner's rapt.

Macb. If chance will have me king,
Why chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

Ban. New honours come upon him
Like our strange garments; cleave not to their mould,
But with the aid of use.

Macb. Come what come may;
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macb. Give me your favour:
My dull brain was wrought with things forgotten.
Kind gentlemen, your pains are register'd
Where every day I turn the leaf
To read them.
Let us toward the king: think upon [*To Banquo.*]
What hath chanc'd: and, at more time,

---

l. 234. — SEATED —] *fixed, firmly placed.* So, in Milton's "Paradise Lost:"

"From their foundations loos'ning to and fro
They pluck'd the *seated* hills."—*Steevens.*

l. 237. — FANTASTICAL,] *imaginary.*

l. 238. Shakes so my single state of man,] See page ix.

l. 240. And nothing is, but what is not.] Nothing is present to me, but that which has yet no existence. I am totally absorbed in surmises concerning the future.

l. 249. Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.] That is, Time, and the due hour terminate the most troubled day. It expresses, that to every difficulty, there comes *its hour* of solution. *The hour*, signifies *the appropriate hour:* it is identified in time, of which it constitutes a part, as having the natural distinction of containing the issue of the event,—the finish of the day. Macbeth takes temporary refuge in this aphorism, from the mental conflict that his unholy and supernatural visitants have excited within him.

l. 251. Give me your FAVOUR:] Give me your *indulgence* or *pardon.*

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Ban. Very gladly.

Macb. Till then, enough.
Come, friends. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Fores. A Room in the Palace.

Flourish. *Enter* DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENOX, *and Attendants.*

Dun. Is execution done on Cawdor?
Are not those in commission yet return'd?

Mal. My liege, they are not yet come back.
But I have spoke with one that saw him die:
Who did report, that very frankly he
Confess'd his treasons; implor'd your highness' pardon;
And set forth a deep repentance:
Nothing in his life became him,
Like the leaving it; he dy'd
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd,
As 'twere a careless trifle.

Dun. There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSSE, *and* ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me: Thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow

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l. 264. ARE not—] The first folio has "*Or* not." The emendation, which both the sense and the construction of the sentence render necessary, was made by the editor of the second folio.

To overtake thee. 'Would thou hadst less deserv'd;
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine; only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.
Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself.
Your highness' part is to receive our duties;
And our duties are to your throne and state,
Children, and servants; which do but what they should,
By doing every thing safe toward your love
And honour.
Dun Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing.—Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me infold thee,
And hold thee to my heart.
Ban. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.
Dun. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.—Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

---

l. 292. — SAFE toward your love
And honour.] *Safe*, is here used in the sense of *conferring security;* as in the Epistle to the Philippians iii. 1: "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is *safe*." Macbeth is speaking with reference to his late defence of Duncan from the enmity that would have robbed him of *the affection and reverence of his subjects;* and the meaning of the sentence is, who do but what they should, by doing every thing that can be done, which *secures to you the love and honour that is your due.*

l. 295. I have begun to PLANT thee, and will labour
To make thee full of GROWING.] To *plant*, is *to establish in a position of profit or distinction.* Thus, in "The Island Princess," by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"So is my study still to *plant* your person."

And the word *growing* was formerly used to signify *accruing wealth or income.* Thus, in the "Letters of Cranmer:" "I shall with all my heart beseech the same to declare your goodness and favour to him by helping his small and poor living. I know he hath very little *growing* towards the supporting of his necessaries." Shakespeare, by associating the two terms, has added to their strength and perfected their metaphorical application.

And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm; whom we name hereafter,
The prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not, unaccompanied, invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers.—From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macb. The rest is labour, which is not us'd for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.

Dun. My worthy Cawdor!

Macb. The prince of Cumberland!—That is a step, [*Aside.*
On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand! yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*

Dun. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant;
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Inverness. A Room in MACBETH's Castle.

Enter Lady MACBETH, *reading a letter.*

Lady M. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learn'd by the perfect'st report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burn'd in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanish'd.

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l. 324. True, worthy Banquo, &c.] This speech intimates that Banquo has been commending to Duncan the valour of Macbeth.

Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hail'd me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referr'd me to the coming on of time, with, 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness; that thou might'st not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promis'd thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd:—Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way: Thou would'st be great;
Art not without ambition; but without
The illness should attend it. What thou would'st highly,
That would'st thou holily; would'st not play false,
And yet would'st wrongly win:
Thou'd'st have, great Glamis, that which cries,
"Thus thou must do, if thou have it;"
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.—

---

l. 348. And that which rather thou dost fear
to do,
Than wishest should be undone.]
This passage, by being printed in modern editions as part of the figured exclamation, has been there perverted from all sense. The object of Macbeth's ambition is not a voluntary agent or rational existence, and "*Thus thou must do, if thou have it,*" is expressed simply by *its nature*, which cannot be supposed also to comment upon the disposition of Macbeth. The reflection on his sensations in connection with it, is made by Lady Macbeth as in her own person; and means,

And it is that which thou dost rather fear
to do,
Than wishest should be undone.

l. 353. Which fate and METAPHYSICAL aid
doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.] In Shakespeare's age, *metaphysical* was synonymous with *supernatural*. Thus, in the English Dictionary, by H. C., 1655, referred to by

Enter an Attendant.

What is your tidings?

Attend. The king comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, wer't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.

Attend. So please you, it is true; our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him;
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady M. Give him tending,
He brings great news. [*Exit Attendant.*
The raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect, and it! Come to my woman's breasts,

Malone, *metaphysicks* are explained as "*supernatural arts*." Lady Macbeth expresses, that she will incite Macbeth to effect in act, what fate and supernatural powers appear to have already effected for him in decree.

l. 366. The raven himself is hoarse,] The *informant* of Duncan's approach to the place where he is to die, is the *raven* that croaks his fatal entrance; and *being scarcely able to speak his message*, is termed a raven of *unusual hoarseness*, or one more than commonly ominous of death. Lady Macbeth's conception being engrossed in her purpose, connects what is only accidental with it.

l. 368. Come, you spirits] It is by a pause in the recital, that complete rhythm is to be here attained. The idea of receiving Duncan is ended at "battlements;" and there the speech rests, before the invocation to evil spirits (which is another thought) commences.

l. 369. — MORTAL THOUGHTS, —] *Deadly thoughts, or destructive designs.* Mortal, deadly. —*Minshen's Dictionary*, 1627.

l. 372. — REMORSE;] *pity.* Thus, in "Measure for Measure:"

> "If so your heart were touch'd with that
> *remorse*
> As mine is to him."

l. 374. Shake my fell purpose, nor keep
PEACE between
Th' effect, and it!] *Peace* has here

And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, "Hold, Hold!"—

Enter Macbeth.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond

---

its double signification of *forbearance from hostility*, and *rest or cessation from action*. The meaning of the passage is, Let no sensations of humanity divert me from my bloody *purpose*, nor keep *amity* and *inaction* between *it* and *the destruction it would effect*. The term *peace*, is suggested to the soliloquizer, as the antithesis of the aggressive and hostile nature of the *purpose* by which she is actuated; and the idea also personifies *peace* as a good angel, standing between violence and its object.

l. 376. And take my milk for gall,] That is, and take my milk in exchange for gall.

l. 378. You wait on NATURE'S MISCHIEF!] *Nature's mischief* here expresses both *injury engendered in human nature* and *done to it*. The use of the term *nature* as denoting *the human race*, is too common in the writings of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, to require exemplification. The word *mischief* was formerly applied to *murder*. Thus, in "The Wits," 1636:

"Mine was a certain inclination, sir,
To do *mischief* where good men of the jury,
And a dull congregation of grey-beards,
Might urge no tedious statute against my life."

The invocation of Lady Macbeth is addressed to those "murdering ministers," who, in an invisible form, incite to bloodshed and further its execution.

l. 380. That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;] That is, that the wound may not be reflected in the brightness of the blade.

l. 381. Nor heaven peep through the BLANKET of the dark,
To cry, "Hold, Hold!"] This is a highly-finished reference to the *darkness*, as the *night-covering* of the earth, by a metaphorical allusion to that article which constitutes the common covering of her inhabitants during the season of repose. And Lady Macbeth invokes the night thus to adjust the earth to sleep, that no ray of light from heaven should penetrate the covering of sleeping nature, and by awakening those concerned to the perception and prevention of their danger, cry, Hold, to her design. It is one of the constant and striking beauties of Shakespeare's language, thus to vivify material agency, by animating it with the intent and purpose in which it is employed.

This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.
Macb. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady M. And when goes hence?
Macb. To-morrow,—as he purposes.
Lady M. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters:—To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my despatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macb. We will speak further.
Lady M. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

---

l. 388. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to night.] This division of these two sentences indicates that hesitation, in Macbeth, to give utterance to his information, which is naturally induced by the horrible imagination that occupies his mind in connection with it. "*O never*" (in the commencement of Lady Macbeth's exclamation, *l.* 392) is also placed by itself, to denote that *prolonged dwelling* upon the phrase, in pronunciation, which may give it the full impression of the eternity of negation that it is the speaker's object to produce. These instructions, thus manifestly presented in the disposition of the lines, both for the comprehending and expressing the feelings represented, no punctuation could adequately convey.

l. 405. To alter FAVOUR ever is to FEAR:] *Favour* is *countenance*, a former frequent acceptation of the term. To *fear*, in addition to its more common meaning, also signifies to *frighten*; as in "Measure for Measure:"

"Setting it up to *fear* the birds of prey."

The sense of the sentence is intentionally doubled. To wear an altered face, an unusual expression of countenance, is at the same time ever to be *irresolute*, and to render others *apprehensive* of a hidden intention. Lady Macbeth alludes to what she has antecedently remarked: that her husband's face betrays strange designs.

SCENE VI.

The same.—Before the Castle.

Hautboys.—Servants of MACBETH *attending.*

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENOX, MACDUFF, ROSSE, ANGUS, *and Attendants.*

Dun. This castle hath a pleasant seat;
The air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is delicate.

Enter Lady MACBETH.

Dun. See, see! our honour'd hostess:
The love that follows us, sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you,

---

l. 408. The air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself] To comment upon the quality of the *air* about the site of private dwellings appears to have been a common habit of the time of Shakespeare. Justice Shallow is represented as doing it, in "King Henry IV.;" and Ben Jonson puts the like remark into the mouth of Crispinus, in "The Poetaster:" "— but you are most delicately situated here, full of sweet delight and blandishment! *an excellent air, an excellent air!*"

l. 409. — our GENTLE SENSES.] *Calm senses;* soothed by the good influence of the atmosphere.

l. 411. — MARTLET, —] This word, in the old edition, is written *bartlet;* and, in the same speech, "*must* breed" is put instead of "*most* breed." The correction, in both cases, was made by Rowe.

l. 414. — COIGNE OF VANTAGE, —] *Advantageous corner.* Coine, corner.—*Minshen's Dict.*

l. 419. The love that follows us, sometime
is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love.] Duncan expresses that the love of others is sometimes troublesome to us; but, because of the kind intention it contains, we receive it with the thanks due to love: in saying which, I

How you shall bid God eyld us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.
Lady M. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad,
Wherewith your majesty loads our house:
For those of old, and the late dignities
Heap'd up to them, we rest your hermits.
Dun. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We cours'd him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us: Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.
Lady M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.
Dun. Give me your hand:
Conduct me to mine host; we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

---

teach you how you should ask God's blessing upon me for giving trouble to you. It is an elegantly punctilious mode of saying that regard for Macbeth and his wife is the cause of his visit. "*God eyld*"—that is, *God yield*—is an old phrase, signifying *God reward*. So, in the romance of "Syr Guy of Warwick," cited by Mr. Steevens:

"Syr, quoth Guy, *God yield it you*,
Of this great gift you give me now."

l. 429. — your HERMITS.] That is, your *beadsmen*; such as pray for their patrons. So, in "Arden of Feversham," 1592:

"I am your beadsman, bound to pray
for you."

SCENE VII.

The same.—A Room in the Castle.

Hautboys and torches. Enter, and pass over the stage, a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service. Then enter MACBETH.

Macb. If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and school of time,
We'd jump the life to come.—But, in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return,
To plague th' inventor: This even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

---

l. 444. If it were done, when 'tis done,] i. e. *If the effects of the murder ended with the committal of it.* The subsequent sentence (explained in the succeeding note) is a paraphrase or amplification of this.

l. 445. — If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence,
and catch,
With his surcease, success;] To *trammel up*, is *to net up*. His *surcease* means his *stop*. *His* is used, as it frequently is, for *its*, and relates to *consequence*. Macbeth fears that the *consequence* which will proceed from the murder he designs to commit will take from him the *success* he desires from it; and he here suggests the conditions by which only this result could be frustrated, in a metaphorical idea of *netting up the consequence* so that it cannot go forth, and, by this arrest of it, *catching* at the same time the *success* at which the assassination aimed. The literal meaning of the passage is, *If the assassination could net up its own consequence, and catch with his* (the consequence's) *stop, success*, &c. That is, if the assassination could attain the result desired, and obviate all other effects of the murder, &c.

l. 449. — BANK and SCHOOL of time,] See page x.

So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself,
And falls on th' other—

Enter Lady Macbeth.

How now, what news?

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l. 466. — the sightless couriers of the air,] *Sightless* expresses the double distinction of *blind* and *invisible;* neither seeing nor being seen; avoiding anything, or avoidable. *The couriers, or messengers of the air*, are the winds —visitants of all parts of the compass; and pity, or heaven's cherubim, are imagined by the excited conception of Macbeth as moved, by the mercilessness of his contemplated offence, to use these to convey the deed to the perceptions of all men.

l. 467. Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.]
Alluding to an object blown into the eye causing it to fill with tears; and also, as Johnson has remarked, to the remission of wind in a shower. The wind that bears the tidings shall cease, from the universal fall of tears that they shall provoke.

l. 468. — I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself,
And falls on th' other —] The whole process of Macbeth's reflection, up to this point in his soliloquy, has been establishing in him the conviction that he can earn nothing but misery by the crime he is intending to perpetrate, and he finds within himself no mental property to incite him to the committal of it, but only "vaulting ambition;" whilst reason instructs him that this, unrestrained by any more sober quality, proceeds, through inordinate desire, with an unbridled rashness that overleaps its object, and falls into ruin beyond it. The *intent* in this metaphor is the *horse; Macbeth* personates *ambition*, (because, with reference to the deed in question, he has cast from him all other motives of action) and is himself both *rider* and *spur* (for these are united in one, because he is describing them in but one and the same quality of *urger of the steed*); and, acting in this character, he foresees that he must overleap what he jumps for, and fall on the other side of it. The word *side* is omitted from the sentence because the entrance of Lady Macbeth interrupts the speaker.

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: Why have you left the chamber?
Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?
Lady M. Know you not he has?
Macb. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.
Lady M. Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;
Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat i' th' adage?
Macb. Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.
Lady M. What beast was't, then,

---

l. 473. He has almost supp'd:] This naturally definite reply of Lady Macbeth, to an apparently general question, simply informing her restless accomplice of the movements of their intended victim, tells how unconsciously he nears his approaching end; and connects and brings on the action of the play with appalling skill.

l. 487. — Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;] The force of this taunt consists in representing the incongruity of a desire for the *highest ornament* to which human life can attain, (the crown) in one who is content to recognize his individual life as characterized by *especial baseness* (cowardice.) The terms, *esteem'st*, *esteem*, *life*, and *live*, are respectively repeated to maintain in full integrity the intended antithesis.

l. 491. Like the poor cat i' th' adage?] The cat would eat fish, but dares not wet her feet.

l. 494. Who dares DO more,] The old edition has, "Who dares *no* more," &c.

l. 495. What BEAST was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprize to me?] Lady Macbeth, perceiving that the exalted character of the argument adduced by her husband renders it impregnable

That made you break this enterprize to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck; and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn,
As you have done to this.
Macb. If we should fail?
Lady M. We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep,

---

to reasoning, skilfully brings him from the moral position in which he was intrenching himself, by ridiculing that position itself, by this powerfully-derisive antithesis:—If, as you imply, this enterprize be not the device of a *man*, what *beast* induced *you* to propose it?

l. 508. If we should fail?

We fail!] It is usual to represent the former of these two phrases as an unfinished sentence, which robs it of much of its true expression; for it is the completed question of an irresolute mind, timorously suggesting, *What would be the consequence of discovery in the attempt?* And it is to such an interrogation that Lady Macbeth's whole reply evinces, by its character, that it is addressed. The punctuation to be used after "*We fail!*" has been unreasonably made a subject of dispute, the context indicating very precisely what is required. For the urgings, by which Lady Macbeth has endeavoured to incite her wavering husband to undertake what she desires, have all along consisted of contemptuous scoffings at his want of courage; and

"We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail,"

is also an exclamatory taunt at his still relaxed and vacillating condition; at once rejecting the idea of failure being possible, except in the event of his not daring to attempt, and, by implying a definite and undoubting assurance of success, stimulating him to resolution. No other form of expression would contain reproof or encouragement equal to what is conveyed by the *note of admiration*. The timorous question and scornfully-emboldening exclamation are in due order and antithesis. "*But* screw" is in the sense of *only* screw; and "*the sticking-place*" is that point at which *courage*, by predominating over all other sensations, will remain fixed, without danger of instability.

It is to view the character of Macbeth with

(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him,) his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassel so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: When in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers? who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell.

Macb. Bring forth men-children only!
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and us'd their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

---

little penetration to suppose that he would receive any incentive to resolved execution, from the intimation that, by failing, he would only at once learn the worst effect of his crime by feeling it (which is the sensation represented by writing *We fail*, simply with a *full stop*); for that is the result of the enterprize from which his moral powers recoil; and Lady Macbeth has throughout exhibited a settled sense of the necessity of removing his apprehension of such a consummation, instead of acquiescing in the possibility of its occurrence. The characteristic form of his question shows him as appalled by the vague imagination of this, and alone sufficiently manifests that to realize it would be, to him, intolerable. A *note of interrogation* (We fail?) has by some been preferred, but Lady Macbeth's repetition of the phrase must be in the nature of *an exclamation*, to express which interrogatively is only to render it less positively.

l. 514. — CONVINCE,] *overcome.—Minsheu's Dict.*

l. 516. — the RECEIPT of reason] i. e. the *receptacle* of reason.—*Malone.*

l. 517. A LIMBECK only:] i. e. only *a vessel to emit vapours:* a *limbeck* being that through which distilled liquors pass into the recipient.

l. 522. Of our great QUELL.] *Quell* is commonly interpreted here to mean *murder;* but it is very improbable that Lady Macbeth should be represented, in this place, as thus characterizing, to her husband, their mutual deed, by its most startling and revolting appellation. To *quell* is to *subdue*, to *defeat;* and, by using this word as a neuter noun, she contrives to veil the heinous nature of their guilt, under an expression at once significative of triumph and of the magnitude of the obstacle subdued. It is equivalent to our great *defeating*, or the great *defeat we make.* So, in "Hamlet:"

"Upon whose property and most dear *life*,
A damn'd *defeat* was made."

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?
Macb. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

The same. Court within the Castle.

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch before him.*

Ban. How goes the night, boy?
Fle. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
Ban. And she goes down at twelve.
Fle. I take't, 'tis later, Sir,
Ban. Hold, take my sword:
There's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out.—Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep:
Merciful powers, restrain in me the cursed thoughts,
That nature gives way to in repose!
Give me my sword: Who's there?

---

l. 532. — BEND UP] A metaphor taken from the drawing of a bow for the dismissal of the shaft.

l. 541. — HUSBANDRY —] *Thrift, frugality.*

l. 545. Merciful powers, restrain in me the cursed thoughts,
That nature gives way to in repose!] Banquo has put from him his several weapons of defence ("Hold, take my sword:" . . . "take thee that too.") from horror at the particular use his dreams have prompted him to make of them; and although a heavy summons to sleep lies like lead upon him, he is resisting its influence to avoid the evil suggestions that intrude upon his repose. He resumes his sword upon hearing approaching footsteps.

Enter Macbeth, *and a Servant with a torch.*

Macb. A friend.

Ban. What, Sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure,
And sent forth great largess to your offices;
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess;
And shut up in measureless content.

Macb. Being unprepar'd,
Our will became the servant to defect;
Which else should free have wrought.

Ban. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have shew'd some truth.

Macb. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

Ban. At your kind'st leisure.

Macb. If you shall cleave to my consent,
When 'tis, it shall make honour for you.

Ban. So I lose none,
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchis'd, and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsel'd.

---

l. 554. — SHUT UP —] *concluded.* So, in Stowe's Account of the Earl of Essex's Speech on the Scaffold: "— he *shut up* all with the Lord's prayer."—*Steevens.*

l. 556. Our WILL became the servant to DEFECT;
WHICH else should free have wrought.] *Which* here relates to *will*, and not to DEFECT, its immediate antecedent. Macbeth personifies *will*, representing it as acting like a niggard in subjugation to *defect*. The meaning of the sentence is, *Not having time to make becoming preparations, our will, or desire to have acted with the liberality of independence, was thwarted by the restraints of imperfection.*

l. 566. If you shall cleave to my consent,
When 'tis, it shall make honour for you.] As Macbeth's timidity in crime renders him desirous of an associate, he is sounding his way, to discover if Banquo will join him in the murder he purposes, and he designedly obscures his guilty question, though

Macb. Good repose, the while!
Ban. Thanks, Sir; The like to you! [*Exit* BANQUO *and* FLEANCE.
Macb. Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. [*Exit Servant.*
Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.—There's no such thing;
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes.—Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

---

not so entirely but that Banquo (if he be inclined to participate with him) may easily apprehend his meaning. *If you shall hold to what I consent to do, when 'tis done, it shall be to your advantage.* The answer he receives deters him from any further assay of the matter.

l. 574. — when my drink is ready,] This night-cup, or posset, was an habitual indulgence of the time; often mentioned by Shakespeare and other writers.

l. 576. Is this a dagger, which I see before me,] The fevered vision of Macbeth is here troubled by an optical delusion, and he continues to entertain a suspicious doubt of its reality, until it assumes, without apparent cause, a bloody appearance, when he at once dismisses it as fanciful.

l. 597. — thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing STRIDES, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.] This sentence is powerfully expressive of the noiseless advance

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.—Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.—Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. [*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire:

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of one whose whole mind is concentrated on an evil purpose. As the method of his action arises in order, in the apprehension of Macbeth, through his incessantly increasing excitement, *wariness* first presents itself to him, as necessary to his object, and then *celerity*; and the natural movement of *hasty caution* would invariably be by the gliding motion of lengthened steps. The original folio has *sides*, instead of *strides*; the emendation being made by Pope. It is confirmed by the synonymous term applied by Shakespeare to the motions of Tarquin, in the "Rape of Lucrece:"

"Into her chamber wickedly he *stalks*."

l. 599. Thou SURE and firm-set earth,] This is printed in the old copy, "Thou *sowre*," &c.; and in the next line, "Which *way they* walk," is put, "Which *they may* walk." It was corrected by Rowe.

l. 602. And take the present horror from the time,] Macbeth, under the influence of his own pernicious purposes, images night, in its darkness, as a season in which the dark thoughts and actions of evil only are in motion; and, with an absorbing sense of his great guilt, designates the *murder*, he now bends his steps to commit, as the *present horror*. With this apprehension of the unmitigated wickedness of his deed, he renders the natural fear of being overheard, by the expression of a spiritual dread lest the fixed and impassible earth should, through a terrible perception of his crime, purposely yield an echo to his tread, and, by betraying where he goes, frustrate his intention, at a time which is, in his troubled conception, so congenial to it. The term *horror* is again used substantively for an *horrible thing*, in the next scene, with reference to the murder of Duncan; and it also occurs, with a similar meaning, in "King Lear:"

"*Kent.* Is this the promis'd end?
Edg. Or image of that *horror?*"

l. 606. — for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.] Alluding to the passing bell, which was formerly tolled as the person was dying, and the spirit about to pass to its destination.

l. 608. That which hath made them drunk, &c.] See page xii.

Hark!—Peace! it was the owl that shriek'd,
The fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good night.
He is about it, the doors are open;
And the surfeited grooms do mock their charge
With snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live, or die.

Macb. [*Within.*] Who's there?—what, ho!

Lady M. Alack! I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done:—th' attempt, and not the deed,
Confounds us:—Hark!—I laid their daggers ready,
He could not miss 'em.—Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter MACBETH.

My husband?

Macb. I have done the deed:
Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber;

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.*

Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in 's sleep,
And one cried "murder!" that they did wake each other;
I stood and heard them: but they did say their prayers,
And address'd them again, to sleep.

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l. 614. With snores:] The snores of the sleeping guardians of Duncan become audible to Lady Macbeth, only upon the doors of his apartment being opened by her husband; thus indicating to the audience the brief pause of listening apprehension, that has naturally detained the murderer before entering the chamber of his victim. This inimitable attention to detail gives appalling vitality to the scene.

Lady M. There are two lodg'd together.
Macb. One cried, "God bless us!" and, "Amen," the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
Listening their fear, I could not say, Amen,
When they did say, God bless us.
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce, Amen?
I had most need of blessing, and Amen stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macb. Methought, I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep;
Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast;"
Lady M. What do you mean?
Macb. Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep; and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

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l. 642. As they had seen me —] i. e. as if. So, in "The Winter's Tale:"

"*As* we are mock'd with art."—*Steevens.*

l. 643. Listening their fear,] i. e. *listening to* their fear. So, in Lyly's "Maid's Metamorphosis," 1600:

"The graces sit *listening* the melody
Of warbling birds." *Steevens.*

l. 652. — the ravell'd sleave of care,] That is, the unwoven sleeve. The image presented is, The much-used sleeve of Want, worn into loose threads, through the need of the owner and the neglect of a painfully occupied mind.

l. 658. Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more!] This exclamation breaks from Macbeth, in the strong delirium of fearful remorse; a sensation which is here naturally and wonderfully expressed. Having, under one designation, *murdered sleep*, it exists no more for him under any *title* or *name* he can assume. Without heeding the interruption of Lady Macbeth, he has continued the current of thought in which his speech commenced:

"Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!'
'Macbeth does *murder sleep*,'"—

That is, *converts it into death.*

Lady M. Who was it that thus cry'd? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things:—Go, get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.—
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: Go, carry them; and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again, I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: The sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood,
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macb. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,
Making the green—one red.

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l. 674. I'll GILD the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their GUILT.] The double reference here made to *gilt*, *gilding*, and *guilt*, *criminality*, serves to exhibit most forcibly, in the ferocious levity of the expression, the strained and sanguinary excitement of Lady Macbeth's mind, under the twofold influence of recent drink and recent crime: I'll *gild* the faces of the grooms withal, for it must seem both their *gilt* and their *guilt*; that is, the *gilding* must appear to be the effect of their *guilt*.

l. 679. Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? &c.] Macbeth thus expresses an overwhelming spiritual sensation of utter inability to clear himself from the stain of his crime; since he will but convert into a witness against himself whatsoever instrument he employs for the purpose. His first thought is, *If much water will do it*; his next, *That the larger the agent he makes use of, the more wide-spread will be the evidence of his guilt.* The concluding phrase of this speech is sometimes written, "Making the *green one, red.*" But *one*, being *singular*, cannot relate to *seas*, which are *plural*. It refers to the *colour*. The imagination of the speaker dwells upon the conversion of the *universal green* into *one pervading red*.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knock.*
I hear a knocking at the south entry:
Retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking.*
Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers:—Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.
Macb. To know my deed,
'Twere best not know myself. [*Knock.*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking!
I would thou could'st! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The same.

Enter a Porter.—[*Knocking within.*]

Port. Here's a knocking, indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. [*Knocking.*]

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l. 694. To know my deed,
'Twere best not know myself.] This is said in reply to the final precept of Lady Macbeth's exhortation, "*Be not lost* so poorly in your thoughts;" the phrase, "*not know myself,*" having this double import: With a knowledge of my deed, I were better *lost to the knowledge both of my nature and of my existence.*

l. 697. *I* would thou could'st!] Thus the original; but, as *I* and *Ay* were formerly written in the same way, it has been left to the option of every editor to make his own choice between the two. Macbeth has here snatched at a hope which he well knows to be fallacious; but because his mind has, for a moment, occupied itself with an image of hope, it sinks into greater despondency when compelled to relinquish it. It is this despair which reveals itself in the exclamation in question; and as it is a feeling concentrated on personality, *ay* is too vague, and not sufficiently emphatic to express what is required of it. It would imply a lingering upon the hope, which does not at all exist.

l. 698. If a man were porter of hell-gate, &c.] This scene strikingly displays the accuracy with

Knock, knock, knock: Who's there, i' th' name of Belzebub? Here's a farmer, that hang'd himself on th' expectation of plenty: Come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock: Who's there, in th' other devil's name? 'Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not

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which Shakespeare makes the action of his characters to grow out of circumstance. The drunken debauchery, in which the porter has passed the night, together with the ominous sounds of evil, by which its silence has been broken, have filled his mind with an instinctive sense of the world's wickedness. When, therefore, he is unwillingly awakened from sleep, to unseemly recollections, by a knocking at the door, it instantly occurs to him to imagine what a constant turning of the key any man would have who kept the gate of hell; and he begins to fashion to himself the manner and multitude of criminals to whom it would be necessary to give admittance.

"*Old* turning of the key," means *repeated* turning, &c. Thus, in "Lingua," 1607: "I imagine there's *old* moving amongst them." And again, "Here's *old* turning," &c.

The expression, "I had thought to have let in *some of all professions, that go the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire*," shows that the satire of the author is here levelled at peculiar vices appendant to particular vocations, and that it exhibits their consequence in the full development to which, by indulgence, they arrive. The first is a just reproof of the blindness of intense selfishness, which leads its votary to destroy himself through his fear of being injured; for the farmer, without waiting to experience the effects of general prosperity, hangs himself, because the prospect of plenty makes him apprehensive that the price of his own produce will fall:—doubtless, a witty gibe at the class during a then-present season of agricultural apprehension of this nature. Censure is next directed against a crime which could not, from its character, have been an ordinary occurrence, and must, therefore, have been, in this instance, of general notoriety, or the allusion would have missed its aim, through the obscurity of the subject of its condemnation. The passage points distinctly at the Gunpowder Plot, where the doctrine of jesuitical *equivocation* formed a prominent feature in the trial of the offenders, and where the *treason* was ostensibly and professedly *committed for God's sake;* as is thus expressed in a letter of one of the conspirators: "No other cause drew me to hazard my fortune and life, but *zeal to God's religion.*" (Digby's Letter to his Wife.) In the third instance, the antithesis is between the *English tailor* and the *French hose.* He betrays his practised skill in thieving, in that he is able to filch from the material of a dress, to the making of which he is unaccustomed, and which doubtless afforded in its fashion fewer facilities for filching than those he was accustomed to make. Thus, in "The Treasury of Ancient and Modern Times," 1613, quoted by Dr. Farmer, mention is made of Frenchmen's hose as "being made *close to their limbes*, wherein they had no meanes for pockets." *Napkins*, are *handkerchiefs*. So, in "Othello:" "Your *napkin* is too little."

equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock: Who's there? 'Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose: Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock: Never at quiet! What are you?—But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking.*] Anon, anon; I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENOX.

Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

Port. 'Faith, Sir, we were carousing till the second cock: and drink, Sir, is a great provoker of three things.

Macd. What three things does drink especially provoke?

Port. Marry, Sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, Sir, it provokes, and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance: Therefore, much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him, and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him, and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to: in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

Macd. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Port. That it did, Sir, i' the very throat o' me: But I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

Macd. Is thy master stirring?—

Enter MACBETH.

Our knocking has awak'd him; here he comes.

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l. 727. — equivocates him IN a sleep,] *In* formerly signified *into*, as well as *in*. Thus, in Lyly's "Euphues:" "— until time might turn white salt *in* fine sugar." It is here used in both senses; viz., tricks him *into* a sleep; and, tricks him *in* a sleep: that is, by a dream.

l. 732. — I made a shift to CAST him.] To *cast*, signifies to *cast up, to vomit*. Thus, in Ben Jonson's "Poetaster:" "I cannot abide them, they make me ready to *cast*." The equivocation is here between *to cast*, in this sense, and *to cast, to throw*; a term of wrestling.

Len. Good-morrow, noble Sir!
Macb. Good-morrow, both!
Macd. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
Macb. Not yet!
Macd. He did command me to call timely on him;
I have almost slipp'd the hour.
Macb. I'll bring you to him.
Macd. I know, this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet, 'tis one.
Macb. The labour we delight in, physics pain.
This is the door.
Macd. I'll make so bold to call, for 'tis my limited service.
[*Exit.* MACDUFF.
Len. Goes the king hence to-day?
Macb. He does:—He did appoint so.
Len. The night has been unruly:
Where we lay, our chimneys were blown down:
And, as they say, lamentings heard i' th' air;
Strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to th' woful time.
The obscure bird clamour'd the livelong night:
Some say, the earth was feverous,
And did shake.
Macb. 'Twas a rough night.
Len. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. O horror! horror! horror!
Tongue, nor heart, cannot conceive, nor name thee!

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l. 746. — LIMITED service.] *Defined, specified* service.

l. 753. And prophesying, &c.] This is called a *prophesy* of events *new-hatched*, or already in existence, because the information is conveyed by *supernatural means;* and the events, though born, are as yet indistinguishable to those to whom this mystic intelligence is given.

Macb. Len. What's the matter?
Macd. Confusion now hath made his master-piece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building.
Macb. What is't you say? the life?
Len. Mean you his majesty?
Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon:—Do not bid me speak;
See and then speak yourselves.—Awake! awake!—
[*Exeunt* Macbeth *and* Lenox.
Ring the alarum-bell:—Murder! and treason!
Banquo, and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself!—up, up, and see
The great doom's image.—Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprights,
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell. [*Bell rings.*

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak.
Macd. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.—

Enter Banquo.

O Banquo! Banquo! Our royal master's murder'd!
Lady M. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
Ban. Too cruel, any where.—
Dear Duff, I pr'ythee, contradict thyself,
And say, it is not so.

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l. 780. To countenance this HORROR!] That is, to act suitably to this actual death and image of doom, by walking like spirits risen from the grave. Horror is here again used as a noun, signifying HORRIBLE OBJECT.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENOX.

Macb. Had I but dy'd an hour before this chance,
I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace, is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN.

Don. What is amiss?

Macb. You are, and do not know 't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.

Mal. O, by whom?

Len. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were all badg'd with blood,
So were their daggers, which, unwip'd, we found
Upon their pillows: they star'd, and were distracted;
No man's life was to be trusted with them.

Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macd. Wherefore did you so?

Macb. Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Out-ran the pauser reason.—Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there the murderers,

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l. 798. The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.] A metaphorical comparison of this world, vaulted by the sky and robbed of its spirit and grace, with a vault or cellar from which the wine has been taken and the dregs only left.

l. 801. YOU ARE, and do not know 't:] i. e. you are *amiss*. The latter word being understood from the question of Donalbain.

Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?
Lady M. Help me hence, ho!
Macd. Look to the lady.
Mal. Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?
Don. What should be spoken here,
Where our fate, hid in an augre-hole,
May rush, and seize us? Let's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

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l. 830. Where our fate, hid in an augre-hole, May rush, and sieze us?] This is an instance of Shakespeare's power of so constructing a specific reference as to carry a general application; for athough he personifies fate, yet the phrase "may *rush* and seize us," shows that his mind had strictly defined the method of its action. The general signification is, *Our fate, concealed in imperceptible or obscure places, may suddenly take us;* but, specifically, the *augre-hole* is the *bore* of a pistol, or the *sheath* of a dagger; and the *rushing death* is the *whizzing ball* of the one, or the *swiftly driven blade* of the other.

This interpretation would be cancelled, by some critics, by the intimation that when Macbeth lived pistols were unknown. But the author has, in an earlier passage of the play, made direct mention of *cannon*, in the description of a battle supposed to have been fought nearly three centuries before their invention; and whether this be through ignorance, or otherwise, he may, with no greater inconsistency, refer in idea to a *pistol*. But it is preposterous to conceive that the all-comparing intellect of Shakespeare could have conducted him through life unobservant of such difference between age and age as the reflection of the least reflecting schoolboy would have distinguished; or that his discriminating judgment and accurate knowledge of mankind would have permitted him inadvertently to compound together, as in unison, the discordant notions and incongruous usages of divided times. He has, in truth, designedly, throughout the whole play, endowed his personages with the refinement of language and cultivation of opinion that would have adorned such dispositions, so circumstanced, in the reign of Elizabeth or James; and he has conferred upon all the details the finish of a corresponding civilization, instead of delineating them with the characteristics due to the comparatively uncivilized period of 1040 or 45, the real date of the story. And it is probable that he adopted systematically the plots of popular tales of more ancient times, or of countries remote from his own, in order to evade the condemnation of the censorship to which theatrical compositions were then subjected, and which might have found offence in his casual strokes of satire, if nominally pointed with an absolutely direct and specific aim against present foibles of wealth, or ill-used prerogatives of power.

Mal. Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.
Ban. Look to the lady:— [*Lady* MACBETH *is carried out.*
And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand; and, thence
Against the undivulg'd pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.
Macd. And so do I.
All. So all.
Macb. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' th' hall together.
All. Well contented. [*Exeunt all but* MAL. *and* DON.
Mal. What will you do?
Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow, is an office
Which the false man does easy:
I'll to England.
Don. To Ireland, I;
Our separated fortune shall keep us both the safer:
Where we are, there's daggers in men's smiles:
The near in blood, the nearer bloody.
Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot,
Hath not yet lighted; and our safest way
Is, to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: There's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left. [*Exeunt.*

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l. 841. — PRETENCE —] *purpose, design.*
Minsheu's Dict.

SCENE III.

Without the Castle.

Enter Rosse *and an old Man.*

Old M. Three score and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful, and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.
Rosse. Ah, good father,
Thou see'st, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage: by th' clock, 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travailing lamp:
Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?
Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,
Was, by a mousing owl, hawk'd at, and kill'd.
Rosse. And Duncan's horses,
(A thing most strange and certain,)
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
Make war with mankind.

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l. 870. And yet dark night strangles the TRAVAILING lamp:] Under this orthography, the word *travailing* formerly bore the double meaning of *travelling, journeying;* and *travailing, labouring* (*Minsheu's Dict.*); and it is here employed in both these senses: denoting, in the first, the *motion* of the sun, and, in the second, its *efforts* to dispel the opposing darkness. The often repetition of these double significations, shows indubitably that they are not fortuitous; and they portray so peculiar a feature in the genius of Shakespeare, as cannot, without great loss, be obscured. It is necessary, therefore, in this place to retain the ancient spelling, that the word may fully express its former intention.

l. 880. — the MINIONS of their race,] The *favourites*, or most perfect of their species. That the horses of Duncan *eat each other*, is mentioned by Holinshed, as one of the prodigies that accompanied the death of that monarch.

Old M. 'Tis said they eat each other.
Rosse. They did so;
To th' amazement of mine eyes, that look'd upon 't.

Enter Macduff.

Here comes the good Macduff:—
How goes the world, Sir, now?
Macd. Why, see you not?
Rosse. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?
Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.
Rosse. Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?
Macd. They were suborn'd:
Malcolm, and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.
Rosse. 'Gainst nature still:
Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up
Thine own life's means!—Then 'tis most like,
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.
Macd. He is already nam'd; and gone to Scone,
To be invested.
Rosse. Where is Duncan's body?
Macd. Carried to Colmes-kill;
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.
Rosse. Will you to Scone?
Macd. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.
Rosse. Well, I will thither.
Macd. Well, may you see things well done there;—adieu!—
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!
Rosse. Father, farewell.
Old Man. God's benison go with you: and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes! [*Exeunt.*

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l. 893. — PRETEND?] *intend* or *design*. So, in Goulart's "Histories," 1607; "The caravell arrived safe at her *pretended* port."—*Ritson*.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Fores.—A Room in the Palace.

Enter Banquo.

Ban. Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promis'd; and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said,
It should not stand in thy posterity;
But that myself should be the root, and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them,
(As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine,)
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush: no more.

Senet sounded. Enter Macbeth, *as King; Lady* Macbeth, *as Queen;* Lenox, Rosse, *Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.*

Macb. Here's our chief guest.
Lady M. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.
Macb. To-night we hold a solemn supper, Sir,
And I'll request your presence.
Ban. Let your highness
Command upon me; to the which my duties

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l. 929. And *all-thing* unbecoming.] So, in King Henry the Eighth's Primer, the hymn in the Compline commences thus:

"O Lorde, the maker of *all-thing*
We pray the nowe in this evening."

l. 932. Let your highness
Command upon me;] *Upon*, here signifies *over*, as in an old translation of a sentence in the New Testament: "He beheld the city, and wept *upon* it." Banquo expresses his recognition of the general and perpetual supremacy of sovereingty in Macbeth:—Let your highness command *over* me; to the which fulness of command, my duties are *for ever* knit.

Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.
Macb. Ride you this afternoon?
Ban. Ay, my good lord.
Macb. We should have else desir'd your good advice
(Which still hath been both grave and prosperous)
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is 't far you ride?
Ban. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night,
For a dark hour, or twain.
Macb. Fail not our feast.
Ban. My lord, I will not.
Macb. We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England, and in Ireland; not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: But of that to-morrow;
When, therewithal, we shall have cause of state,
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse:
Adieu, till you return at night.
Goes Fleance with you?
Ban. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.
Macb. I wish your horses swift, and sure of foot;
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell.— [*Exit* BANQUO.
Let every man be master of his time

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l. 958. And so I do COMMEND you to their backs.] To *commend*, is, in this placc, *to commit carefully*, or *to make over*. Thus, in King Richard II., the following sentence is used to signify an absolute and solemn renunciation of hostilities:

"His glittering arms he will *commend* to rust."

l. 960. Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night, to make society
The sweeter welcome.] An alteration is commonly made in the metre and punctuation of these lines; and Macbeth is represented as saying,

To make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone.

Whereas he really affects to dismiss his court from the restraints of society, not for his own gratification, but as a boon to them, in order that their reunion at his table may be rendered more agreeable to each of them. And he merely signifies his own intention to retain none about himself, but to pass the intervening time alone.

Till seven at night, to make society
The sweeter welcome.
We will keep ourself till supper-time alone:
While then, God be with you.
[*Exeunt Lady* Macbeth, *Lords*, *Ladies*, &c.
Sirrah, a word with you: Attend those men
Our pleasure?
Attend. They are, my lord, without the palace gate.
Macb. Bring them before us.— [*Exit Attendant.*
To be thus, is nothing, but to be safely thus:
Our fears in Banquo stick deep;
And in his royalty of nature reigns that,
Which would be fear'd: 'Tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none, but he
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of King upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,

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l. 969. To be thus, is nothing, but to be safely thus:] That is, to be thus is nothing, *unless* to be safely thus.

l. 973. And, to that dauntless temper —] i. e., and *added* to that, &c.

l. 976. — under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar.] It was a prevailing notion, in the time of Shakespeare, that the spirit of one man was sometimes supernaturally controlled by that of another, beyond his power of resisting it; which is thus exemplified by Lord Bacon. "There was an Egyptian soothsayer, that made Antonius believe that his genius, which otherwise was brave and confident, was, in the presence of Octavius Cæsar, poor and cowardly: and therefore he advised him to absent himself as much as he could, and remove far from him. This soothsayer was thought to be suborned by Cleopatra, to make him live in Egypt and other remote places from Rome. Howsoever, the conceit of a predominant or mastering spirit of one man over another is ancient, and received still, even in vulgar opinion."—*Bacon's Works*, vol. iv., p. 504.

No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance!—
Who 's there?—

Re-enter Attendant and two Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call. [*Exit Attendant.*
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?
1 *Mur.* It was, so please your highness.
Macb. Well then,
Now have you consider'd of my speeches?
Know, that it was he, in the times past,
Which held you so under fortune;
Which, you thought, had been our innocent self:
This I made good to you in our last conference;
Pass'd in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand: how cross'd;
The instruments; who wrought with them;
And all things else, that might,
To half a soul, and to a notion craz'd,
Say, Thus did Banquo.

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l. 986. — have I FIL'D my mind;] i. e., *defiled*. So, in "The Miseries of inforc'd Marriage," 1607: "— like smoke through a chimney, that *files* all the way it goes."

l. 991. — the SEEDS of Banquo kings!] See page v.

l. 993. — to th' UTTERANCE!] This term is derived from the French, *à l'outrance*, to *extremity*. Thus, in the Fourteenth Book of Golding's Translation of Ovid's Metamorphosis:

"To both the parties at the length from battell
for to rest,
And not to fight to *utterance*."—*Steevens*.

l. 1004. — PROBATION —] *proof*.—*Minsheu's Dict.*

l. 1005. — BORNE IN HAND:] *To bear in hand*, signifies *to delude with false expectations*,

1 *Mur.* You made it known to us.
Macb. I did so;
And went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting.
Do you find your patience so predominant
In your nature, that you can let this go?
Are you so gospell'd, to pray for this good man,
And for his issue, whose heavy hand
Hath bow'd you to the grave, and beggar'd
Yours for ever?
1 *Mur.* We are men, my liege.
Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are cleped
All by the name of dogs: the valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike: and so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say 't;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off;
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.
2 *Mur.* I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Hath so incens'd, that I am reckless what I do,
To spite the world.
1 *Mur.* And I another,

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to *deceive.* Thus, in the 14th of Eliz., 1572, an Act of Parliament was passed against "such as practise abused sciences, whereby they *bear* the people *in hand* that they can tell their destinies, deaths," &c.

So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.
Macb. Both of you know Banquo was your enemy.
2 Mur. True, my Lord.
Macb. So is he mine: and in such bloody distance,
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: And though I could
With bare-fac'd power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will avouch it; yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down: and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love;
Masking the business from the common eye,
For sundry weighty reasons,
2 Mur. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.
1 Mur. Though our lives ——
Macb. Your spirits shine through you.
Within this hour, at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace; always thought,
That I require a clearness: And with him,

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l. 1048. — and in such bloody distance,
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life:] *Bloody distance* denotes the *fatal space* between mortal antagonists in fight, which here figuratively represents *active antagonism* in feeling; and one, every minute of whose existence threatens to destroy that *which sits nearest the heart or life in desire*, is imaged by a foe in mortal combat, whose thrusts are incessantly directed *nearest to the heart, or most vital part of the body*.

l. 1065. Acquaint you with the perfect SPY o' th' time,] *Spy* is here employed as a noun, derived from the verb to *spy*, and signifies *discovery by secrecy and artifice*. Macbeth expresses, I will acquaint you with the infallible *discovery by secret and cunning examination*, of the time of Banquo's coming by.

l. 1068. That I require A CLEARNESS:] *A clearness* here means, *a clearness* or *exemption from suspicion*, as regards himself; and *a clearness* or *completeness*, as regards the work to be done.

(To leave no rubs, nor botches, in the work,)
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart;
I'll come to you anon.

2 Mur. We are resolv'd, my lord.

Macb. I'll call upon you straight; abide within.
It is concluded:——Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The same. Another Room.

Enter Lady Macbeth, *and a Servant.*

Lady M. Is Banquo gone from court?

Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady M. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Serv. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

Lady M. Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth.

How now, my lord? why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making?
Using those thoughts, which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what's done, is done.

Macb. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams,
That shake us nightly: Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstacy.
Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further!
Lady M. Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.
Macb. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while that we must lave

---

l. 1100. — Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our PEACE, have sent to peace,] Thus the old copy. The editor of the second folio wrongly changed "our *peace*," into "our *place*." Macbeth's entire frame is here shaken by an agonizing desire for *peace* of mind; and the pith of the sentence is, that it is better to be with the dead, because they have the *peace* of mind we desired to gain. The alteration destroys the force of the original antithesis, as the *dead* have not *place*. The whole tenor of the speech shows that it is not *place*, but *cessation of wild longings and apprehensions*, that is the point on which the thoughts of the speaker are riveted; and he is making a comparison (in this respect disadvantageous as regards himself) between his own case and that of Duncan; the sense of the line being, *Whom we, to gain our content, have helped to contentment.* He feels, that whatsoever be the object aimed at, *relief from the tortures of unsatisfied desire* is the ultimate motive of his action; and that he has obtained for Duncan, by the condition in which he has placed him, that rest of heart, which he was vainly seeking, by other means, for himself. In short, as any mind would do, thus painfully and intensely strung, he recognizes, in his own sensations, the *abstract cause* of his actions, instead of contemplating the *material* upon which it had sought, but failed to gratify itself:—he forgets the *crown* in the strife in which its attainment has involved him.

l. 1103. In restless ECSTACY.] *Ecstacy*, in its general sense, signifies any violent emotion of the mind. Here it means the emotion of pain, agony. So, in Marlowe's "Tamburlaine:"

"Griping our bowels with retorqued thoughts,
And have no hope to end our *extasies*."

Steevens.

l. 1115. Unsafe the while that we must lave
Our honours in these flattering streams, &c.] That is, *our greatness is insecure whilst it is compelled to stoop to*

Our honours in these flattering streams;
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.
Lady M. You must leave this.
Macb. O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st, that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.
Lady M. But in them nature's copy 's not eterne.
Macb. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal,
There shall be done a deed of dreadful note.
Lady M. What's to be done?
Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,

---

flattery and deception for its preservation; the gorgeous richness of the language likewise suggesting that this species of *ablution* is requisite to prevent the stain upon ill-gotten dignities from being cavilled at. Macbeth calls upon his wife to pay *compulsory deference* to Banquo, at a banquet where he does not expect him to appear, that by so representing him as a dangerous threatener to their power, he may discover if she will recommend the course he has previously taken concerning him; and having obtained her desired sanction, he triumphantly hints at the murder he has projected.

l. 1122. But in them NATURE'S COPY 's not eterne.] *Nature's copy*, is *the form of man*, or *of human nature*. So, in Lyly's "Euphues:" "If the Gods thought no scorn to become Beastes, to obtaine their beste beloved, shall Euphues be so nice in changing his *copy* to gain his lady?" And again, in "Othello:" "Thou cunning'st *pattern of* excelling *nature*." Lady Macbeth expresses, that in Banquo and his son the form of humanity is not eternal; that is, is destructible.

l. 1126. The SHARD-BORNE beetle, —] The *shards* are the protecting *scales* upon the back of the beetle, which he stretches forth when in the act of flight. Thus, in "Antony and Cleopatra," Enobarbus says of Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, "They are his *shards*, and he their *beetle*;" meaning that they *shield* and *sustain* him in his eminence, whilst he performs for them the less seemly actions of state that weigh upon their high dignity. Mr. Steevens has appositely cited Gower, "De Confessione Amantis," in confirmation of the employment of the term shards, for scales:

"She sigh her thought, a dragon tho,
Whose *sherdes* shynen as the sonne."

l. 1131. — SEELING night,] *Seeling*, is *blinding*. It is literally explained, by Minsheu, *to sew up the eyelids;* and is a term in the vocabulary of falconry relating to a practice resorted to in the training of hawks.

Skarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
And, with thy bloody and invisible hand,
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale!—Light thickens;
And the crow makes wing to th' rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marv'llest at my words; but hold thee still;
Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill:
So, pr'ythee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The same. A Park or Lawn, with a Road leading to the Palace.

Enter three Murderers.

1 *Mur.* But who did bid thee join with us?
3 *Mur.* Macbeth.
2 *Mur.* He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers
Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.
1 *Mur.* Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace,
To gain the timely inn; and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
3 *Mur.* Hark! I hear horses.
Ban. [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho!

---

l. 1134. Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond.] So, in King Richard III.:

"*Cancel his bond of life*, dear God, I pray."

l. 1136. — the ROOKY wood:] That is, the wood already *largely occupied by rooks;* thus betokening, more strongly, the fast setting in of night.

l. 1138. Whiles night's black agents to their PREYS do rouse.] *Preys* is here made thus conspicuously plural, because it individualizes more pointedly the peculiar prey of each differing agent of evil; and so denotes that it comprehends within its meaning, every kind of prey, of every species of vicious power that the darkness favours.

2 *Mur.* Then 't is he;
The rest that are within the note of expectation,
Already are i' th' court.
1 *Mur.* His horses go about.
3 *Mur.* Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to th' palace gate
Make it their walk.

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch.*

2 *Mur.* A light, a light!
3 *Mur.* 'Tis he.
1 *Mur.* Stand to 't,
Ban. It will be rain to-night.
1 *Mur.* Let it come down. [*Assaults* BANQUO.
Ban. O treachery!
Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly;
Thou may'st revenge. O slave! [*Dies.* FLEANCE *escapes.*
3 *Mur.* Who did strike out the light?
1 *Mur.* Was't not the way?
3 *Mur.* There's but one down; the son is fled.
2 *Mur.* We have lost
Best half of our affair.
1 *Mur.* Well, let's away, and say how much is done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Room of State in the Palace.

A Banquet prepared. *Enter* MACBETH, *Lady* MACBETH, ROSSE, LENOX, *Lords, and Attendants.*

Macb. You know your own degrees, sit down:
At first and last, the hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macb. Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state; but in best time,
We will require her welcome.
Lady M. Pronounce it for me, Sir, to all our friends;
For my heart speaks, they are welcome.

Enter First Murderer to the Door.

Macb. See, they encounter thee with their heart's thanks:—
Both sides are even: Here I'll sit i' th' midst:
Be large in mirth; anon, we'll drink a measure
The table round.—There's blood upon thy face.
Mur. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macb. 'Tis better thee without, than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?
Mur. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
Macb. Thou art the best o' th' cut-throats:
Yet he's good, that did the like for Fleance:
If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.
Mur. Most royal Sir,
Fleance is 'scap'd.
Macb. Then comes my fit again:
I had else been perfect;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock;
As broad, and general, as the casing air:
But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?
Mur. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.
Macb. Thanks for that:—
There the grown serpent lies; the worm, that's fled,

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l. 1180. Our hostess keeps her STATE;] *A state* was *a canopy*, under which the regal chair was placed. Thus, in a passage cited by Malone, from "The View of France," 1598: "— espying the chayre not to stand well under the *state*, he mended it handsomely himself." The phrase, "keeps her state," here expresses both that she *continues in this place of dignity*, and *maintains the distinctions of her rank*. It manifests the restless condition of Macbeth's mind, that he is unable to retain his seat, but makes an excuse to move from place to place.

Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present.—Get thee gone; to-morrow
We'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit Murderer.*
Lady M. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold,
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a making,
'Tis given with welcome: To feed, were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.
[*The Ghost of* Banquo *rises, and sits in* Macbeth's *place.*
Macb. Sweet remembrancer!—
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!
Len. May it please your highness sit?
Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
Than pity for mischance!
Rosse. His absence, Sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company?
Macb. The table 's full.
Len. Here is a place reserv'd, Sir.
Macb. Where?
Len. Here, my good lord.
What is 't that moves your highness?

The Ghost of Banquo rises.] It is usual to defer the coming of the Ghost of Banquo until Lenox has spoken. In the original copy, his entrance is marked here at the moment when Lady Macbeth recalls her husband to the table, upon his dismissal of the murderer, and whilst he is felicitating himself upon the certainty of Banquo's death. His attention is first directed towards the queen, and afterwards to his guests; and as his restlessness renders him averse to being seated, he involuntarily averts his observation from the vacant place, until he is compelled, by reiterated entreaties, to recognize it, and does not, therefore, immediately perceive the apparition. The dramatic conception, finely to indicate the sensations of the man and to excite the interest of the audience, who await this recognition, is very perfect. It was the belief of the time, that ghosts were invisible to all, excepting the person by whom they were themselves desirous to be seen.

Macb. Which of you have done this?
Lords. What, my good lord?
Macb. Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.
Rosse. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.
Lady M. Sit, worthy friends:—my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well: If much you note him,
You shall offend him, and extend his passion;
Feed, and regard him not.—Are you a man?
Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.
Lady M. O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws, and starts,
(Impostors to true fear,) would well become
A woman's story, at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all 's done,
You look but on a stool.
Macb. Pr'ythee, see there!
Behold! look! lo! how say you?—
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.—
If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [*Ghost disappears.*
Lady M. What! quite unmann'd in folly?
Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

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l. 1242. You shall offend him, and extend his PASSION;] *Passion* here bears its two senses, of *suffering* and *anger*. You will, by offending him, prolong the *suffering* of his fit, and increase the *anger* he seems to express.

l. 1249. — O, these FLAWS, and starts,
(Impostors to true fear,)] *Flaws* are sudden gusts. Lady Macbeth would persuade her husband that his cause of terror is *merely fanciful*, by the argument that such brief and changing expressions of fear, as he exhibits, are only impostors compared with what its steady expression would be, if the Spirit of Banquo were *really present*.

Lady M. Fie, for shame!
Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end: but now, they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: This is more strange
Than such a murder is.
Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.
Macb. I do forget:—
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down:——Give me some wine, fill full:——
Ghost rises.
I drink to th' general joy o' th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.
Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.
Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!
Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'Tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
Macb. What man dare I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger,
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves

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l. 1283. And all to all.] i. e., all good wishes to all; such as he had named above, *love, health, and joy.*—*Warburton.*

Shall never tremble: Or, be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhibit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow. [*Ghost disappears.*
Unreal mock'ry, hence!—Why, so;—being gone
I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still.
Lady M. You have displac'd the mirth,
Broke the good meeting, with most admir'd disorder.
Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.
Rosse. What sights, my lord?
Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse:
Question enrages him: at once, good night:—
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

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l. 1298. If trembling I INHIBIT then, &c.] The old copy has, "*inhabit* then;" but the turn of the sentence points out its due correction. To *inhibit*, is to *forbid*. (*Minsheu's Dict.*) Macbeth sets *what he would say*, under other circumstances, in opposition to *what he has said*, under those in which he stands. He has fearingly *forbidden* the Ghost of Banquo his presence; ("Avaunt! and quit my sight!") but, he adds, take any form but that, and if trembling I *inhibit* or *forbid* then, protest me the baby of a girl.

l. 1305. And OVERCOME us like a summer's cloud, &c.] The word *overcome* has a double meaning. Can such things be, and *extend over* us,—that is, over our spirits,—and also, *subdue* or *oppress* our nature, in the same manner only as a summer thunder-cloud, and, like it, excite in us no particular surprise? It alludes to the familiar, slightly oppressive influence of the atmosphere of a thunderstorm. To *overcome*, occurs in the sense of to *extend over*, in Spencer's "Fairy Queen," xiii. 3, c. 8, st. 4, cited by Dr. Farmer:

"—— a little valley —
All covered with thick woods, that quite it *overcame*."

l. 1306. — You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I OWE, &c.] To *owe*, here means to *own* or *possess*. The sense expressed is, *You make me feel as strange or unnatural, the very disposition to fear, which belongs or is natural to me on beholding such sights, when I see you so wholly unaffected by them.*

Len. Good night, and better health
Attend his majesty!
Lady M. A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt Lords and Attendants.*

Macb. It will have blood, they say;
Blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
Augurs, and understood relations, have
By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night?
Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.
Macb. How say'st thou that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

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l. 1322. Augurs, and understood relations, have

By magot-pies, &c.] i. e., augurs, and such-like understood or intelligible connections between mankind and these things, have by their means discovered the most secret murderers. *Magot-pies* are *magpies*.

l. 1326. How say'st thou that Macduff denies his person

At our great bidding?] How say you? is idiomatically used for *What say you, or what think you of this circumstance?* as in a preceding part of this same scene: "Behold! look! lo! *how say you?*" And "our *great* bidding," here expresses, both our *high* and our *general* bidding. The meaning of the question is, *What do you infer from the fact that Macduff refuses to present himself at our royal and general invitation?*

In the compositions of Shakespeare nothing is omitted that can serve to set forth his conceptions in the spirit of actual life. It is, therefore, his practice to connect the actions, in which the qualities and dispositions of his personages are exhibited, by frequent intimations to his audience, that the intervals between the exits and the entrances of all, are to be thought on as occupied, by each individual of the drama, in such disposal of himself and the materials around him as is consistent with what has been definitely shown of the character both of the one and of the other. He intends imagination to view this as ripening the whole to a consummation, and he consequently expects it to be ready at all times to receive any suggestions as to what these occupations have been. Thus the portion of the dialogue here alluded to implies that a general invitation to the nobles, or influential persons of his kingdom, has been issued by Macbeth, which Macduff has privately professed himself unwilling to obey. The expression, "I hear it by the way," that is, *incidentally*, Macbeth himself explains in the succeeding line, as signifying, *I hear it by the indirect means of feed household spies.* And his declaration, "*but I will send,*" in reply to the interrogation which precedes it, shows that this question is received by him in the sense of, Did you send to him in *particular?* as distinguished from a previous and more general summons; for Macduff could not have *denied* his presence where there had been no former

Lady M. Did you send to him, Sir?
Macb. I hear it by the way; but I will send:
There's not a one of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
(And betimes I will,) to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst: for mine own good,
All causes shall give way; I am in blood
Stepped in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;
Which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd.
Lady M. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macb. Come, we'll to sleep: My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear, that wants hard use:—
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Heath.

Thunder. *Enter* HECATE, *meeting the three Witches.*

1 *Witch.* Why, how now, Hecate? you look angerly.
Hec. Have I not reason, beldams, as you are,
Saucy, and overbold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth,
In riddles, and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,

---

demand upon him at all. Moreover, the phrase "there's not a one *of them*," denotes that Lady Macbeth (being the person addressed) is supposed to understand Macbeth's reference as here made to *a specified class*, whose presence he had already required by a *general* request, which he now intends to render *particular* as regards Macduff. The neglect of this invitation is also referred to, by Lenox, in Scene 6, as the cause of Macduff's disgrace:

"——— and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace."

Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful, and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now: Get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron,
Meet me i' th' morning; thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells, provide,
Your charms, and every thing beside:
I am for th' air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that, distill'd by magic slights,
Shall raise such artificial sprights,
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion:
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear:
And you all know, security
Is mortal's chiefest enemy.

Song. [*Within.*] "Come away, come away," &c.

Hark, I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit.*

1 *Witch.* Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be
Back again. [*Exeunt.*

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l. 1367. — a vap'rous drop PROPOUND;] That is, a drop that has *profound, deep,* or *hidden* qualities.—*Johnson.*

l. 1377. *Come away,* &c.] This song, by which Hecate is called away, is contained entire in Middleton's Play entitled "The Witch;" but the two lines that constitute the summons is all that is appropriate to this scene.

SONG. "*Come away, come away,*
Heccat, Heccat, come away."

l. 1381. Back again.] These words are usually made to terminate the line here coming

SCENE VI.

Fores. A Room in the Palace.

Enter LENOX *and another Lord.*

Len. My former speeches
Have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret further: only, I say,
Things have been strangely borne: The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth:—marry, he was dead:—
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm, and for Donalbain,
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink, and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For t'would have anger'd any heart alive,
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think,
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key,
(As, an't please heaven, he shall not,) they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace!—for from broad words, and 'cause he fail'd

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before them; but "*be*" is the concluding word of that line, in the original copy, and is intended to rhyme with *see* and *me* in the two preceding lines, the witches addressing each other in a kind of chant.

l. 1390. Who cannot WANT the thought, how monstrous, &c.] To *want* is here used to signify *needful, compulsory desire.* The sentence expresses, Who cannot *desire, as a strong necessity of his nature,* to think such a crime monstrous. It is an impressive manner of saying, that there are none to whose disposition such a deed is not hideous and repugnant. A strong emphasis is required upon the word *want,* to give it the impression intended, and also upon *monstrous;* and as this necessarily detains the tones of the speaker upon the line, it supplies the rhythm.

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace: Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?
Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court; and is receiv'd
Of the most pious Edward with such grace,
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect: Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland, and warlike Siward:
That, by the help of these, (with Him above
To ratify the work,) we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights;
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives;
Do faithful homage, and receive free honours,
All which we pine for now: And this report
Hath so exasperate their king, that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.
Len. Sent he to Macduff?
Lord. He did: and with an absolute, "Sir, not I,"
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums; as who should say, "You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer."
Len. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England, and unfold
His message ere he come; that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accurs'd!
Lord. I'll send my prayers with him! [*Exeunt.*

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l. 1407. The SON of Duncan,] The old copy has, *sons*. Corrected by Theobald.

l. 1421. — THEIR king, —] i. e. Macbeth. *Their* refers to Malcolm and Macduff. The one has obtained protection of the English king, and the other is seeking from him assistance against Macbeth; and the report of this their distrust and hostility, has so exasperated *their*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A dark Cave. In the middle, a Cauldron boiling.

Thunder. *Enter the three Witches.*

1 *Witch.* Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
2 *Witch.* Thrice, and once, the hedge-pig whin'd.
3 *Witch.* Harpier cries:—'Tis time, 'tis time.
1 *Witch.* Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.—
Toad, that under cold stone,
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmed pot!
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.
2 *Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,

---

king, &c. The term distinguishes the king of Scotland from the king of England. It is usual to alter it, erroneously, into *the*: (*the* king.)

l. 1437. Thrice, and once, the hedge-pig whin'd.] As *even numbers* were considered inappropriate to magical operations, the second witch makes the *fourth* cry of the hedge-pig an *odd number*, by her method of counting. *She tells three, and then begins a new reckoning.*

l. 1438. Harpier cries:] It is unknown what *Harpier* (the term of the original folio) is intended to represent. The spirit of the passage is, however, evident, since the witches divine, by these various cries, the propitious moment for commencing their incantations. In Middleton's ancient Drama of "The Witch," the hooting of the owl is similarly noticed by Hecate, as denoting the due moment for departing on a night journey through the air; and this is probably an ancient appellation applied to that, or some other nocturnal bird of prey.

"*Hec.* Heard you the owle yet?
Strad. Briefly in the copps.
Hec. 'Tis high time for us then."

l. 1441. Toad, that under cold stone,] Reference is here made to a habit, natural to the toad kind, of availing themselves of the cool shelter of a stone; and the metre is intentionally retarded, to mark that the witch modulates her tones, and slackens the movement of their round, to assimilate with the drowsy nature of the action specified.

l. 1445. Double, double toil and trouble;] This chorus signifies the effect which the witches desire their charms should produce, upon their victims, and upon the world.

Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.
3 *Witch.* Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf;
Witches' mummy; maw, and gulf,
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark;
Root of hemlock, digg'd i' th' dark;
Liver of blaspheming Jew;
Gall of goat, and slips of yew,
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse;
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips;
Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab;
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For th' ingredients of our caudron.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.
2 *Witch.* Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE, *and other three Witches.*

Hec. O, well done; I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' th' gains.

---

l. 1451. — BLIND-WORM'S sting,] The *blind-worm* is the *slow-worm.*—See *Minsheu's Dict.*

l. 1458. — maw, and GULP
Of the RAVIN'D salt-sea shark;] The *gulf* is the *swallow*. *Ravin* is *prey*, or *food taken by violence*. And *ravined* here means *gorged with such prey*. The witches not only make use of what is thought to be vicious in nature, but also endeavour to obtain it when it has been most exerting its evil propensities; they therefore take the *throat* and *stomach* of the shark, just after it has *glutted itself with prey*.

l. 1468. — CHAUDRON,] i. e. *entrails*. The orthography of the term *cauldron*, in the subsequent verse, is varied, in the original folio, to render the rhyme more complete. It is still pronounced as *caudron*, in the North, and may be found, in this form, in the poems of Robert Burns.

And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

Song.

" Black spirits and white,
Red spirits and grey ;
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may."

2 *Witch.* By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes :——
Open, locks, whoever knocks.

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?
What is 't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
(Howe'er you come to know it,) answer me:
Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's german tumble all together,

---

l. 1479. Black spirits, &c.] The two first words only of this song are given in the original edition. The remainder of the stanza was added by Mr. Steevens, from Middleton's "Witch." Malone has remarked, that Reginald Scot, in his "Discovery of Witchcraft," 1584, enumerating the different kinds of spirits, particularly mentions *white*, *black*, *grey*, and *red* spirits.

l. 1497. — though the treasure
Of nature's GERMAN, &c.] The lection of the ancient text has here been modernly altered into *germins*, or seeds, to the annihilation of its true meaning, and the unspeakable depreciation of its force. Nature's *german* (or *germaine*, as it was formerly written,) are *nature's kindred*, or *those who stand in the relation of brotherhood to one another*; that is, *mankind*

Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.
1 *Witch.* Speak.
2 *Witch.* Demand.
3 *Witch.* We'll answer.
1 *Witch.* Say, if thoud'st rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters'?
Macb. Call 'em, let me see 'em.
1 *Witch.* Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease, that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.
All. Come, high, or low;
Thyself, and office, deftly show.

Thunder. An Apparition of an armed Head rises.

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power, ——
1 *Witch.* He knows thy thought;
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

---

in general. The treasure of nature's german is, therefore, *the treasure, or the best of the human race.* And Macbeth exhibits the violent selfishness, and ruthless character, of the apprehensions by which he is actuated, in the desire that these may so fall in mingled ruin, that destruction may be gorged to sickness, rather than his doubts should continue unresolved. Shakespeare frequently uses the term *nature* for *human nature;* as in the following passage from "King Lear:"

> "Crack *nature's* moulds, all *germins* spill at once,
> *That make* ingrateful *man.*"

And the same sentence contains the only instance of his use of the word "*germaines*" for *germins*, or *seeds:* and this single application of it, in that sense, is suggested by an association of ideas, habitual to his analogical style of thought, because he is there speaking of *seeds* of *a kindred nature* only. The conception of making Macbeth imagine *the treasure of nature's seeds* tumbling together, till destruction sickens, is comparatively feeble, and little appropriate; as his thoughts are palpably occupied with the notion of such things as are upon the world's surface only, being cast down in confusion by a storm to be raised by the witches, in the performance of their operations, of which this was supposed to be a needful accompaniment. Thus, in "The Muses' Looking-Glass," 1638:

> "I thought there was some *conjuring* abroad,
> *'Tis such a terrible wind.*"

l. 1512. — DEFTLY show.] i. e., *adroitly, dexterously.*

An Apparition of an armed Head rises.] The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's

App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Beware Macduff;
Beware the thane of Fife.—Dismiss me:—Enough. [*Descends.*
Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright;—But one word more:—
1 *Witch.* He will not be commanded: Here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. An Apparition of a bloody Child rises.

App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—
Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.
App. Be bloody, bold, and resolute:
Laugh to scorn
The power of man; for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*
Macb. Then live, Macduff; What need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear, it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.—

Thunder. An Apparition of a Child crowned, with a Tree in his hand, rises.

What is this, that rises like the issue of a king;
And wears upon his baby brow, the round
And top of sovereignty?

---

head cut off, and brought to Malcolm, by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The child with a crown on his head and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough, and bear it before them to Dunsinane.—*Steevens.*

Shakespeare has here strikingly illustrated the utter perfidy of the witches, since the instruments employed by them, to convince Macbeth of his security, are the very symbols of his destruction.

l. 1524. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.] Had I three ears, or a threefold sense of hearing, I would listen with all to you only. The exclamation is suggested by the treble repetition of his name.

l. 1535. — the ROUND,
And TOP of sovereignty?] The *round* is that part of the crown that encircles the head. The *top* is the ornament that rises above it.—*Johnson.*

All. Listen, but speak not to 't.
App. Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*
Macb. That will never be;
Who can impress the forest; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? sweet bodements good!
Rebellious head, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time, and mortal custom.—Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: Tell me, (if your art
Can tell so much,) shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?
All. Seek to know no more.
Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:—
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this? [*Hautboys.*
1 *Witch.* Show!
2 *Witch.* Show!
3 *Witch.* Show!
All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart.

Eight Kings appear, and pass over the Stage in order; the last with a Glass in his hand; Banquo *following.*

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l. 1544. Who can impress the forest;] i. e. who can command the forest to serve him like a soldier impressed.—*Johnson.*

l. 1546. Rebellious head, —] The old copy has, "Rebellious *dead.*" It was corrected by Theobald. The term *head* was applied to a multitude of people collected together for war-like purposes, as well as to an individual. Thus, in "Look about you," 1600:

"Is like a *head* of people, mutinous."

It is, in the text, intended to embrace, in its reference, both meanings.

l. 1556. — what noise is this?] This word was anciently applied to *music.* Thus Stowe writes of "the *noise* of birds, praising God in their kind."

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls:—And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first:—
A third is like the former:—Filthy hags!
Why do ye show me this?—A fourth?—Start, eyes!
What! will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet?—A seventh?—I'll see no more:—
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,
Which shows me many more: and some I see,
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
Horrible sight!—Now, I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.—What, is this so?
1 *Witch.* Ay, Sir, all this is so:—But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?—
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights,
And show the best of our delights;
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antique round:

---

l. 1563. — And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first:] The word *hair* was formerly used to express *breed*, *character*, or *condition*. Thus, in "The Family of Love:" "— they say I am of the right hair." This proverbial distinction, attached to the term, probably led the author to the selection of this physical distinction of the lineage from which the person was descended.

l. 1569. — who bears a GLASS,
Which shows me many more:] In an "Extract from the Penal Laws against Witches," cited by Mr. Steevens, it is said, "they do answer either by voice, or else do set before their eyes in *glasses*, chrystal stones, &c., the pictures or images of the persons or things sought for."

l. 1571. That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:] This was intended as a compliment to King James I., who first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head; whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo.—*Warburton.*

l. 1573. — the BLOOD-BOLTER'D Banquo —] To *bolter* signifies, in Warwickshire, to *besmear*. Also, hair matted together with blood or otherwise, is said to be *boltered*.—*Steevens.*

l. 1577. — his SPRIGHTS,] i. e. his *spirits*. So, in Sidney's "Arcadia," lib. ii., cited by Mr. Steevens:

"Hold thou my heart, establish my *sprights*."

The malignant mockery of Macbeth, by music and dancing, as the *best* delights they can confer on one spell-bound by disappointment and misery, well completes, in this their final exit, the character in which Shakespeare has continued to depict the witches throughout the play.

That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and vanish.*

Macb. Where are they? Gone?—
Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calender!—
Come in, without there!

Enter Lenox.

Len. What's your grace's will?
Macb. Saw you the weird sisters?
Len. No, my lord.
Macb. Came they not by you?
Len. No, indeed, my lord.
Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd, all those that trust them!—I did hear
The galloping of horse: Who was't came by?
Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word,
Macduff is fled to England.
Macb. Fled to England?
Len. Ay, my good lord.
Macb. Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
Unless the deed go with it: From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done;
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to th' edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do, before this purpose cool:
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

[*Exeunt.*

---

l. 1610. But no more sights!] See *Appendix*.

SCENE II.

Fife. A Room in MACDUFF's Castle.

Enter Lady MACDUFF, *her Son, and* ROSSE.

L. Macd. What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Rosse. You must have patience, madam.
L. Macd. He had none:
His flight was madness: When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.
Rosse. You know not,
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
L Macd. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion, and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.
Rosse. My dearest coz,
I pray you school yourself: But for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' season. I dare not speak much further:
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear;

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l. 1632. — when we are traitors,]
And do not know ourselves;] When we are traitors in the eyes of the government, and do not know ourselves as such, or are ignorant of our treason.

l. 1633. — when we HOLD rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,] To *hold* here means, to *receive*, or *believe*. So, in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona:" "I *hold* him but a fool." The passage expresses, When we credit rumours of ill intentions toward us because they accord with our fear, although we have no definite knowledge of what we fear.

But float upon a wild and violent sea,
And each way move.—I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before.—My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!
L. Macd. Father'd he is,
And yet he's fatherless.
Rosse. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace, and your discomfort:
I take my leave at once. [*Exit* Rosse.
L. Macd. Sirrah, your father 's dead;
And what will you do now? How will you live?
Son. As birds do, mother.
L. Macd. What, with worms and flies?
Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.
L. Macd. Poor bird!
Thoud'st never fear the net, nor lime,
The pit-fall, nor the gin.
Son. Why should I, mother?
Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.
L. Macd. Yes, he is dead;
How wilt thou do for a father?
Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?
L. Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

---

l. 1635. But float upon a wild and violent sea, And each way move.] The old copy has, "Each way *and move*." But the position of the conjunction *and* is thus so injurious to the sense, as to make its accidental transposition manifest; for this construction of the sentence actually leads the reader to the consideration of a contrary motion to that which the metaphor so pointedly indicates; which is, That men, being troubled in their thoughts by the violence and uncertainty which surrounds them, *alternate in their purposes this way and that*, as upon the waters of a troubled sea. This is the action upon which the mind is palpably intended to dwell, instead of being carried onward to the contemplation of a *forward* motion, which the unqualified addition of *and move* is calculated to suggest. The ancient meaning of the verb to *float*, as given by Minsheu, is, *to wave up and down*.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.
L. Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit;
And yet i' faith, with wit enough for thee.
Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?
L. Macd. Ay, that he was.
Son. What is a traitor?
L. Macd. Why, one that swears and lies.
Son. And be all traitors, that do so?
L. Macd. Every one that does so, is a traitor,
And must be hanged.
Son. And must they all be hanged, that swear and lie?
L. Macd. Every one.
Son. Who must hang them?
L. Macd. Why, the honest men.
Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men, and hang up them.
L. Macd. Now, God help thee, poor monkey!
But how wilt thou do for a father?
Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.
L. Macd. Poor prattler! how thou talk'st.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I doubt, some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage;
To do worse to you, were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit Messenger.*
L. Macd. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world; where, to do harm,

Is often laudable: to do good, sometime,
Accounted dangerous folly: Why then, alas!
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm? ——
What are these faces?

Enter Murderers.

Mur. Where is your husband?

L. Macd. I hope, in no place so unsanctified,
Where such as thou may'st find him.

Mur. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou ly'st, thou shag-hair'd villain.

Mur. What, you egg? [*Stabbing him.*
Young fry of treachery?

Son. He has killed me, mother;
Run away, I pray you. [*Dies.*

[*Exit Lady* Macduff, *crying "Murder!" and pursued by the Murderers.*

SCENE III.

England. A Room in the King's Palace.

Enter Malcolm *and* Macduff.

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macd. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,
Bestride our downfall'n birthdom: Each new morn,
New widows howl; new orphans cry; new sorrows

---

l. 1705. — shag-hair'd villain.] The original folio has *shag-ear'd;* but as *shag-haired* is a frequent term of abuse in old plays, and is also used by Shakespeare himself, in King Henry VI.,—"like a *shag-hair'd* crafty kern," —there can be no doubt that this unmeaning word is a misprint. It was formerly often written *shag-heard*, which perhaps led to this error of the press.

l. 1714. — our down-fall'n birthdom:] The old copy has down-*fall*." Corrected by Dr. Johnson.

Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.
Mal. What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and, what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so, perchance,
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have lov'd him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me; and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb,
T' appease an angry god.
Macd. I am not treacherous.
Mal. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil,
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose:
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.
Macd. I have lost my hopes.
Mal. Perchance, even there,
Where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife, and child,
(Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,)
Without leave taking?—I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties:—You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

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l. 1725. — I am YOUNG;] i. e. I am *inexperienced.*

l. 1726. You may deserve —] In the ancient edition, "You may discerne." Corrected by Theobald.

l. 1731. A good and virtuous nature may recoil,
In an imperial charge.] Dr. Johnson has soundly explained this passage,—"A good mind may recede from goodness in the execution of a royal commission." But the phrase here used also figures forth a king's power of moral temptation, in a metaphorical adaptation of the idea of *resistance being borne down by the charge of an imperial army.*

Macd. Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dares not check thee! wear thou thy wrongs,
The title is affeer'd!—Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich east to boot.
Mal. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think, our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right:
And here, from gracious England, have I offer
Of goodly thousands: But, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before;
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.
Macd. What should he be?
Mal. It is myself I mean: in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted,
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow; and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
With my confineless harms.
Macd. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell, can come a devil more damn'd
In evils, to top Macbeth.

---

l. 1748. — wear thou thy wrongs,
The title is AFFEER'D!] *Affeer'd* is a law term for confirmed.—*Pope.* Macduff receive's Malcolm's replies as a rejection of his proposal to disturb the usurper. He says, therefore,—apostrophizing Macbeth by the designation of tyranny,—*Great tyranny, wear thou thy wrongs* (that is, the name and symbols of royalty of which you are wrongfully possessed), *the title to them is confirmed to you by their legitimate owner.* The sentence is also strengthened by a play upon the word *affeer'd*:—Wear thou thy wrongs, for the veritable title, or the right, is *afear'd* to assert itself.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust; and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will: Better Macbeth,
Than such a one to reign.
Macd. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hood-wink.
We have willing dames enough; there cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclin'd.
Mal. With this, there grows,
In my most ill-compos'd affection, such
A stanchless avarice, that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands;
Desire his jewels, and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more; that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good, and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.
Macd. This avarice
Sticks deeper; grows with more pernicious root

---

l. 1791. CONVEY your pleasures in a spacious plenty,] To *convey*, connected as it here is with the word *spacious*, not only expresses *to carry on pleasures, passing from one to another in an extensive area of variety*, but it also denotes, according to a familiar meaning of the term in the time of Shakespeare, to do it *covertly, stealthily*, and *thievishly*.

Than summer-seeming lust: and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: Yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
Of your mere own: All these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.
Mal. But I have none: The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them; but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.
Macd. O Scotland! Scotland!
Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.
Macd. Fit to govern! No, not to live.—O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptr'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again?
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accurs'd,
And does blaspheme his breed?—Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king; the queen, that bore thee,
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet,
Dy'd every day she liv'd. Fare thee well!
These evils, thou repeat'st upon thyself,

---

l. 1808. Than SUMMER-SEEMING lust:] *Summer-seeming* has been here occasionally altered into summer-*seeding*, a term altogether irrelevant to Macduff's train of argument, which aims not at characterizing *lust* with regard to its increase, but simply as to the degree of its hold upon the heart of man. He qualifies it as an annual weed, exhibiting itself only in the *summer* or *youth* of life, instead of enduring like the perennial *avarice*, and extending its roots deeper by age. The term *summer-seeming* not only signifies that lust *bears a fair appearance in and to the summer of life alone*, but also hints at the delusive character of vice, in its show and promise of joyousness.

Have banish'd me from Scotland.—O, my breast,
Thy hope ends here.
Mal. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wip'd the black scruples, reconcil'd my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me
From over credulous haste: But God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction: here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to woman; never was forsworn;
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own;
At no time broke my faith; would not betray
The devil to his fellow; and delight
No less in truth, than life: my first false speaking
Was this upon myself: What I am truly,
Is thine, and my poor country's, to command,
Whither, indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth:
Now we'll together; and the chance of goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?
Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once,
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well; more anon.—Comes the king forth,
I pray you?

---

l. 1857. — THY here-approach,] In the old copy, "*they* here-approach;" which was corrected by the editor of the second folio.

l. 1860. — and the chance of goodness,
Be like our WARRANTED quarrel!] *Warranted* means *made sure or certain.* Malcolm, having the power of contesting his rights assured to him, expresses enthusiastically, *And may our chance of blessing or success, be as sure as our chance of fighting.* The term *warranted* is used because it implies the *justice* of the contest, as well as its *certainty*.

Doct. Ay, Sir: there are a crew of wretched souls,
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art: but, at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.
Mal. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*
Macd. What 's the disease he means?
Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Rosse.

Macd. See, who comes here?
Mal. My countryman; but yet I know him not.
Macd My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.
Mal. I know him now: Good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!
Rosse. Sir, Amen.
Macd. Stands Scotland where it did?

---

l. 1867. — CONVINCES] *overpowers.*

l. 1883. — With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;] Shakespeare has here followed the relation of Holinshed, doubtless for the purpose of introducing a compliment to the reigning sovereign, according to the practice of the stage writers of his time. The royal touch was, in that age, still deemed a cure for the disease called the king's evil. Thus, in Laneham's "Account of the Entertainment at Kenilworth Castle," it is said that nine persons were so healed by Queen Elizabeth.

Rosse. Alas, poor country;
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile:
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstacy; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd, for who; and good men's lives,
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken.
Macd. O, relation, too nice, and yet too true!
Mal. What's the newest grief?
Rosse. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.
Macd. How does my wife?
Rosse. Why, well.
Macd. And all my children?
Rosse. Well too.
Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
Rosse. No; they were well at peace, when I did leave 'em.
Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech; How goes 't?
Rosse. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.
Mal. Be 't their comfort,
We are coming thither: Gracious England hath

---

l. 1898. — shrieks that RENT the air,] To *rent*, is an ancient verb. Thus, in "The Legend of Orpheus and Eurydice," 1595:

"While, with his fingers, he his haire doth *rent*."—*Malone.*

l. 1900. A MODERN ecstacy;] i. e., *a common or familiar* ecstacy. So, in "All's Well that Ends Well:" "— and we have our philosophical persons, to make *modern* and familiar things supernatural and causeless."

Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men;
An older, and a better soldier, none
That Christendom gives out.
Rosse. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words,
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.
Macd. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief,
Due to some single breast?
Rosse. No mind, that's honest,
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to you alone.
Macd. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.
Rosse. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound,
That ever yet they heard.
Macd. Humph! I guess at it.
Rosse. Your castle is surpriz'd: your wife, and babes,
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.
Mal. Merciful heaven!—
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief, that does not speak,
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
Macd. My children too?
Rosse. Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.
Macd. And I must be from thence! My wife kill'd too?
Rosse. I have said.
Mal. Be comforted:
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

---

l. 1933. — a FEE-GRIEP,] A grief of which one has the fee-simple: vested, without division or reversion, in an individual.

l. 1946. — the QUARRY —] Quarry was a term used in sporting; most commonly to denote *the game after it was killed.*

Macd. He has no children.—All my pretty ones?
Did you say, all?—O, hell-kite!—All!
What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop?
Mal. Dispute it like a man.
Macd. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me.—Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls: Heaven rest them now!
Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue!——But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front,
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland, and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!
Mal. This tune goes manly.

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l. 1959. He has no children.] A question has been raised, by commentators, as to whether this is said, by Macduff, of Malcolm or Macbeth. But, independent of the unprovoked and improbable rudeness of making a reply *at* his accepted sovereign, instead of *to* his kindly intended address, it is evident that the phrase refers directly to the terms of Malcolm's proposal,—"Let's make us med'cines of our *great* revenge;"—Macduff intending to express that materials for such adequate revenge are wanting, as *Macbeth has no children* to meet the purpose.

l. 1980. This TUNE goes manly.] The old copy has *time*, instead of *tune;* but a misprint of the one for the other was easily made, and the text was rightly altered by Rowe; as Shakespeare has, in several instances, used *tune* in this figurative sense, but in no case has he so applied the word *time*, nor anywhere employed it as synonymous with *tune*. And notwithstanding the assertion of Gifford, in his edition of Massinger, that it was so used, yet the passage to which he there refers as containing *tune* in a similar sense, is paralleled simply through his misinterpretation of it. It is as follows:

> "The *motion* of the spheres is out of *time*,
> Her musical notes but heard."

This is the rhapsody of a lover upon the singing of his mistress; and *time* has here no allusion whatsoever to *tune;* the meaning of the sen-

Come, go we to the king: our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave: Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
The night is long, that never finds the day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.

Enter a Doctor of Physic, and a waiting Gentlewoman.

Doct. I have two nights watch'd with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walk'd?

Gent. Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature! to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching. In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking, and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gent. That, Sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may, to me; and 'tis most meet you should.

---

tence being, not that the *music* of the spheres seems inharmonious, or out of *tune*, by comparison with her notes, but that the *motion* of the spheres is out of *course or due season*; they being at once arrested or delayed in their befitting or accustomed action, by rapture at her song. And even admitting these terms ever to have been technically synonymous, yet *time*, in relation to harmony, must necessarily have possessed a degree of peculiarity,—a more decided reference to *measure* rather than to *tone or expression*,—that would have constituted it unsuitable to the figurative application of the text.

l. 1984. Put on their instruments.] To *put on* is here to *urge on*, or *put forward*.

Gent. Neither to you, nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady MACBETH, *with a Taper.*

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Doct. How came she by that light?

Gent. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense are shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustom'd action with her, to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark, she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One; Two; Why, then 'tis time to do 't:—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account!—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

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l. 2009. Ay, but their sense ARE shut.] *Sense* is used, in this place, as a plural noun. So, in the 112th Sonnet of Shakespeare:

"In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's *sense*
To critic and to flatterer stopped *are*."

l. 2015. Yet here's a spot.] Lady Macbeth has been represented as hitherto unchangingly ruthless in cruelty, and unrepentant in crime; although that which would at last awaken her remorse was foreshown in the third act:

"— nought's had, all's spent,
When our desire is got without content."

She has attained the crown she desired, but not the contentment she expected with it. The kingdom is in rebellion; the love and homage due to royalty, "and all the large effects that troop with majesty," fly from her command; and because, during the absence of her husband, she has no longer anything to divert her gaze from the wickedness of her life, her hardihood has given way.

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife; Where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to;
You have known what you should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.
Oh! oh! oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charg'd.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well.

Gent. Pray God, it be, Sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep, who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your night-gown; look not so pale:—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand; what's done, cannot be undone: To bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit Lady* Macbeth.

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gent. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisp'rings are abroad: Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine, than the physician.—
God, God, forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her:—So, good night:
My mind she has mated, and amaz'd my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

Gent. Good night, good doctor. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Country near Dunsinane.

Enter, with Drum and Colours, MENTETH, CATHNESS, ANGUS, LENOX, *and Soldiers.*

Ment. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.
Revenges burn in them: for their dear causes
Would, to the bleeding, and the grim alarm,
Excite the mortified man.
Ang. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.
Cath. Who knows, if Donalbain be with his brother?
Len. For certain, Sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry; there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.
Ment. What does the tyrant?
Cath. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say, he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.
Ang. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands:
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
Those he commands, move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

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l. 2066. Would, to the bleeding, and the grim alarm,
Excite the MORTIFIED MAN.] i. e. their great causes of revenge would excite to answer the bloody and grim call to arms, *even one who had mortified the deeds or members of the body.* The expression is derived from the writings of St. Paul, Rom. viii. 13; Col. iii. 5.

Ment. Who then shall blame
His pester'd senses to recoil, and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself, for being there?
Cath. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd:
Meet we the med'cin of the sickly weal;
And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
Each drop of us.
Len. Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower, and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam. [*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE III.

Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.

Enter MACBETH, *Doctor, and Attendants.*

Macb. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all;
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane.
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm!
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences, have pronounc'd me thus:
"Fear not, Macbeth: no man, that's born of woman,
Shall e'er have power upon thee."—Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:
The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sag with doubt, nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?
Serv. There is ten thousand——
Macb. Geese, villain?

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l. 2094. — the MED'CIN —] i. e. the *physician.* So Florizel, in "The Winter's Tale," calls Camillo "the *medecin* of our house."—*Steevens.*

Serv. Soldiers, Sir.
Macb. Go, prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?
Serv. The English force, so please you.
Macb. Take thy face hence.—Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have liv'd long enough: my May of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf:
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

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l. 2121. — This push
Will CHEER me ever, or disseat me now.] Dr. Percy proposed to substitute *chair* for *cheer*, in this passage; but, setting aside the absurdity of the notion of a king being *chaired* by a *push*, the phrase "Will *cheer* me ever," is the evident antithesis to the preceding declaration, "*I am sick at heart;*" that sensation having naturally suggested this opposite exclamation. The image represented appears to be *the pushing or passing on of the wine cup, for that parting draught which will either raise the spirits of the drinker to the utmost, or else entirely subdue and bear him to the ground.* The idea of a debauch is in accordance with the wild and excessive excitement of the speaker, and the summary expression, *this push*, is equally suited, in the rapid and indiscriminating violence of his thoughts, to the passing of the flagon, as to the action he really intends to indicate.

l. 2123. — my MAY of life] This sentence is printed, in the original folio, "my *way* of life;" and it was suggested by Dr. Johnson that the manifest interruption of the metaphor pointed out the facile misprint of *way* instead of *may*. And indeed, whether the phrase "my *way* of life," be interpreted as signifying *my way of living*, that is, the habits and actions by which life is expressed; or *my course of life*, that is, the changing path through which it moves; or both of these; it may be safely asserted, that amongst the throng of allegories that ornaments the pages of Shakespeare's writings, no single instance can be adduced in which the parts that constitute the figure are conjoined irrelevantly, and void of any natural relation to each other; such as would be the conversion of *actions*, or the *way* or *path*, into a *leaf* of any kind. Not only did the vastness and soundness of his genius forbid him such incongruous conceptions, but the inexhaustible wealth of his intellectual resources enabled him to shun, without difficulty, this species of discrepancy; and the various portions of his metaphors invariably hold an internal connection as close and true, as their representation of whatsoever they are designed to symbolize is full and perfect. The *seasons* here represent *the life of man*. *May*, therefore, designates his *youth*. The metaphor is complete. And because, in his transit from youth to age, Macbeth has declined from hope to despair, from

I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!——

Enter Seyton.

Sey. What's your gracious pleasure?
Macb. What news more?
Sey. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.
Macb. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.
Sey. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macb. I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, skirr the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear.—Give me mine armour.—
How does your patient, doctor?
Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.
Macb. Cure of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

---

joy to sorrow, from glory to ignominy, he seems, on retrospection, to have descended from a previous exaltation, and this he naturally denotes by the term *fallen;* which also maintains, unbroken, the allusion to what is called the *fall* of the year.

l. 2144. Cure of that.] So the first folio. The text was altered, by the editor of the second folio, into "Cure *her* of that;" a phrase inferior in adaptation and vigour to the original sentence; for Macbeth mentally applies it to himself, and therefore generalizes both his command and his question. To this meaning the Doctor palpably replies; for he says not *herself*, as confining his reference to the *queen*, but "Therein the patient must minister to *himself*." The sense is, Cure *thou* of that. But the abbreviated form of the expression accords with the turbulence of Macbeth's mind, and the phrenzied hurry of his thoughts; and is also more emphatic.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.—
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff:—
Seyton, send out.—Doctor, the thanes fly from me:—
Come, Sir, dispatch:—If thou could'st, doctor, cast
The water of my land, find her disease,
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.—Pull 't off, I say.—
What rhubarb, senna; or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence!—Hear'st thou of them?
Doct. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.
Macb. Bring it after me.—
I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane. [*Exit.*
Doct. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Country near Dunsinane: a Wood in view.

Enter, with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD *and his Son,* MACDUFF, MENTETH, CATHNESS, ANGUS, LENOX, ROSSE, *and Soldiers, marching.*

Mal. Cousins, I hope, the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.
Ment. We doubt it nothing.

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l. 2156. — CAST
THE WATER of my land,] *To cast the water* was formerly the common phrase for the method then in use for finding out disorders. So, in "The Wise Woman of Hogsdon," 1638: "Mother Nottingham, for her time, was pretty well skilled in *casting waters*."—*Steevens.*

l. 2160. — Pull 't off, I say.] The painful restlessness of Macbeth is here very forcibly denoted. No sooner has he commenced arming himself, than, unable to endure the restraint of the armour he has so perversely insisted on putting on, he commands the attendant to take it off again, as intolerable to him; and he presently gives the order, "Bring it after me."

l. 2161. — SENNA;] The old copy has *cyme*, for which the present lection was substituted by Rowe, no such drug as the former being known.

Siw. What wood is this before us?
Ment. The wood of Birnam.
Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him; thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.
Sol. It shall be done.
Siw. We learn no other, but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down befor't.
Mal. 'Tis his main hope;
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him, but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.
Macd. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.
Siw. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have, and what we owe,

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l. 2184. For where there is ADVANTAGE to be given,
Both MORE AND LESS have given him the revolt;] *Advantage* is *convenience, opportunity.* The phrase *more and less*, means *greater and less.* Thus, says Dr. Johnson, in the interpolated "Mandeville," a book of that age, there is a chapter on *India the More and the Less.* Malcolm replies (in reference to the previous remark of Siward), that Macbeth has shut up himself and his followers in the castle, because in every case in which opportunity must be *given them*, both great and small have *given him* the revolt.

l. 2188. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, &c.] Let our just decisions on the defection of Macbeth's followers, attend upon the actual result of the battle; and let us, in the meanwhile, be industrious soldiers. That is, let us not be negligent through security.

l. 2191. The time approaches, &c.] Siward here replies to Macduff's observation on the faultiness of Macbeth's soldiers, and on the activity of their own:—The time approaches that will enable us to decide, with that just judgment (of which you speak), both what advantages we may truly say we have in the disaffection of the enemy, and what we actually owe or possess in our own good soldiership.

Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate;
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate:
Towards which, advance the war. [*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE V.

Dunsinane. Within the Castle.

Enter, with Drums and Colours, MACBETH, SEYTON, *and Soldiers.*

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, "They come:" Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie,
Till famine, and the ague, eat them up;
Were they not forc'd with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. What is that noise?

[*A cry within, of Women.*

Sey. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaught'rous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.—Wherefore was that cry?

Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have dy'd hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.—
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;

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l. 2206 — my senses would have COOL'D] i. e. would have become *chilled* through apprehension.

l. 2207. — FELL of hair] *Fell* is *skin.*

l. 2217. To the last syllable of RECORDED TIME;] This refers to *time prophetically recorded* as yet to come, and means *the day of judgment.* See Revelation, x. 5, 6: "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, ... *that there should be time no longer.*"

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusky death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life 's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.—

Enter a Messenger.

Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.
Mess. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do 't.
Macb. Well, say, Sir.

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l. 2219. The way to DUSKY death.] This epithet is, in the old folio, written *dusty*; nor would the mere preservation of the propriety of the metaphor, by producing the antithesis of *lighted* and *dusky*, be sufficient warrant for alteration, although this is an argument of no light weight when the phraseology of Shakespeare is in question; and more especially where the force of the imagery is so materially increased by presenting the contrast, as it is here. But that the feeling which possesses Macbeth is, *that light has effected nothing more for folly but only to light it on its way into darkness*, (and that therefore *dusky* is the true reading) the turn of thought in which he pursues this soliloquy affords ample proof. *Life*, ending in *darkness*, has suggested to him the idea of connecting it with *darkness* as a *shadow*,—a something akin to that *blackness*, to which it is prosecuting its way. The *brief candle* is the *day*,—the time that the day gives for life; and the *living man* is the *shadow* walking between *this light* and that *dusky death* to which it is lighting him. And the sensation expressed in this combination of apostrophe and reflection,—"Out, out, brief candle! life's but a walking shadow,"—is, *that life is but a delusive resemblance of an endurable substance, and it is useless to withhold it from mingling at once with the darkness to which it is so closely related, that to it it is hastening, and to it it will go.* But the notion is pursued yet further, and the *poor player* is but the *shadow* of the substance or reality whose semblance he has assumed. With the term *dusty*, the *shadow* has no affinity; and by retaining this word, the otherwise exquisitely preserved unity of thought would consequently be destroyed. The careful reader of Shakespeare must be so conversant with this continuity of a metaphor, showing many phases, and yet exhibiting through all one only spirit, in whatever position they may be considered, as to recognize at once the justice of this correction of the text. The epithet *dusky* is employed in reference to *death* in King Richard III.:

"Untimely smother'd in their *dusky graves*."

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.
Macb. Liar and slave! [*Striking him.*
Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:
Within this three mile you may see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.
Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.—
I pull in resolution; and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane;"—and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
If this which he avouches, does appear,
There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone.—
Ring the alarum bell:—Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back. [*Exeunt.*

---

l. 2239. Till famine CLING thee:] "In consequence of death, the muscles lose elasticity and volume, and the skin clings closer about them. A peach is said to be *clung* when the internal moisture has evaporated, and the peel contracts about it with minute corrugations. The features of the dead are said to be *clung* when they sharpen and lose their roundness of contour."—*Life of W. Taylor*, vol. i. p. 504.

l. 2241. I PULL IN resolution;] Macbeth has relied for support upon the prophecies concerning himself. Whatever resolution he has *put forth* in his acts was dependant upon this reliance; and finding these prophecies to be fallacious, he says, *I pull in* or *withdraw resolution*, and begin to doubt, &c. In connection with this expression, Monk Mason has quoted an appropriate expression from Fletcher's "Sea Voyage:"

> "——— and all my spirits,
> As if they heard my passing bell go for me,
> *Pull in their powers*, and give me up to destiny."

SCENE VI.

The same. A Plain before the Castle.

Enter, with Drums and Colours, Malcolm, *old* Siward, Macduff, *&c., and their Army, with Boughs.*

Mal. Now near enough;
Your leavy screens throw down,
And show like those you are:—You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff, and we,
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.
Siw. Fare you well.—
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.
Macd. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

[*Exeunt. Alarums continued.*

SCENE VII.

The same. Another part of the Plain.

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.—What's he,
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young Siward.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?
Macb. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

---

l. 2265. — I must fight the course.] A phrase taken from bear-baiting. So, in "The Antipodes," 1638: "Also you shall see two ten-dog *courses* at a great bear."—*Steevens.*

Yo. Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.
Macb. My name 's Macbeth.
Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.
Macb. No, nor more fearful.
Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st. [*They fight, and young* SIWARD *is slain.*
Macb. Thou wast born of woman.—
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. That way the noise is:—Tyrant, show thy face:
If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kernes, whose arms
Are hir'd to bear their staves; either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou should'st be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited: Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarum.*

Enter MALCOLM *and* SIWARD.

Siw. This way, my lord;—the castle 's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.
Mal. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.
Siw. Enter, Sir, the castle. [*Exeunt. Alarum.*

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l. 2289. — BRUITED:] *reported.—Minsheu's Dict.*

Re-enter MACBETH.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn.
Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.
Macd. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*
Macb. Thou losest labour;
As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macd. Despair thy charm;
And let the angel, whom thou still hast serv'd,
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macb. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.—I'll not fight with thee.
Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' th' time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole; and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."
Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.

Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: Before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough."

[*Exeunt, fighting.*

Retreat. Flourish. Re-enter, with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, ROSSE, LENOX, ANGUS, CATHNESS, MENTETH, *and Soldiers.*

Mal. I would the friends we miss were safe arriv'd.
Siw. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
Rosse. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only liv'd but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he dy'd.
Siw. Then he is dead?
Rosse. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siw. Had he his hurts before?
Rosse. Ay, on the front.
Siw. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

---

l. 2337. And damn'd be him that first cries, "HOLD, ENOUGH."] The thought is taken from the old military laws which inflicted capital punishment upon "whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them; except that they did fight a combat in a place enclosed; and then no man shall be so hardy as to bid *hold*, but the general."—p. 264 of Mr. Bellay's "Instructions for the Wars." *Tollet.*

The characterization of Macbeth is thus finely finished in his dismissal. No sooner is he compelled to relinquish his doubtful and enervating dependance on the treacherous prophecies of witchcraft, and to rely on the unaided resources of his own strength, than the natural physical boldness of his disposition again breaks forth in the very face of despair.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.
Siw. He 's worth no more;
They say, he parted well, and paid his score;
And so, God be with him!—Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter Macduff, *with* Macbeth's *Head on a Pole.*

Macd. Hail, king! for so thou art:
Behold where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head: the time is free;
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine,—
Hail, King of Scotland!
All. Hail, King of Scotland! [*Flourish.*
Mal. We shall not spend a large expense of time,
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour nam'd. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,—
As calling home our exil'd friends abroad;
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny!
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher, and his fiend-like queen;
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life;—This, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
We will perform in measure, time, and place:
So thanks to all at once, and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

---

l. 2365. I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's PEARL,] So, in Sir Philip Sydney's "Ourania," by W. Breton, 1606:

"——— an earl,
And worthily then termed Albion's *pearle*."
Malone.

APPENDIX.

By Mr. Collier's publication of certain manuscript alterations discovered in a copy of the folio of 1632, the public are made his debtors for some very sure and admirable corrections of former misprints in the works of Shakespeare. It must, nevertheless, be admitted that his zeal in the cause of his author has, in many instances, thrust aside his more sober judgment, and induced him to give the sanction of his countenance to indisputably erroneous innovations on the ancient text. Thus, in the following sentence (*l.* 381):

"Nor heaven peep through the *blanket* of the dark,
To cry, 'Hold, Hold!'"

the MS. annotator substitutes *blankness* for *blanket*. But what general impediment would *blankness* interpose to the broader operations of sight, to countenance the intimation of contracted and partial vision denoted in the qualifying phrase "*peep through?*"

In the subjoined sentence (*l.* 1494):

"Though *bladed* corn be lodg'd,"

Mr. Collier's manuscript puts *bleaded* for *bladed;* and it is indeed well known that what is commonly called *bladed corn* is not liable to be lodged or destroyed by storms. But it is possible that Shakespeare may have used this phrase to denote that condition of the corn when the *ear*, not having burst forth, lies yet *enfolded in the blade;* and if otherwise, still even so the inconsistency with ordinary fact would not warrant a conjectural interference with the text, since it may have been the author's intention to indicate a supernatural destructiveness and violence of tempest, by specifying under its effects, "corn that is *blasted before it is grown up.*" That is, annihilated in its earliest promise. The annotator appears to have been unaware of the scope of this speech; for further on he changes *slope* into *stoop*, in the annexed passage (*l.* 1496):

"Though palaces and pyramids do *slope*
Their heads to their foundations," &c.

But Macbeth is imagining the utmost exaggeration of havoc that a hurricane can effect; and the term *slope* is employed with premeditation by the poet, as it is intended to express, imperatively, a downfall of the objects designated, entire and at once,—*overturned from their foundations.* Whereas the phrase, "*stoop* their heads," might signify a fall of the top only, or a more gradual overthrow.

An equally injurious alteration is made in the subsequent passage (*l.* 1610):

"No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:
But no more *sights!*"

At this point in the tragedy, Macbeth has been seeking to extinguish his ever-torturing apprehensions by inquiries into the future, through the medium of forbidden and supernatural agencies; and, wildly distracted by the painful nature of the excitement to which he has been subjected, he has cursed alike his act and his instruments:

"Let this pernicious hour,
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!"

* * * * *

"Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them!"

These fierce denunciations sufficiently proclaim how greatly the *visions* he has seen of futurity are oppressing him. Whilst in this phrensied condition, he is informed that Macduff, the person against whom his fears have been mostly directed, is fled from his reach; and he decrees, in the ravings of his wrath, to

"give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line."

"But" (he adds) "but no more *sights!*"

He has already looked so far into the events of time, as to see, in the entire extermination of his hard-earned greatness, how vain are these harrowing strifes from which he cannot now recede; and, in this exclamation of a moment, his hideously predominant sense of the fruitlessness of the sufferings into which he has been betrayed, by the unholy promptings of witchcraft, is fully disclosed, in one concentrated phrase, to the comprehension of the hearer. Being henceforth excluded from hope in the future, he determines to revenge his disappointment by the headlong gratification of every sudden desire that arises in his maddened appetite for relief; but he cannot endure to contemplate the futility of their ultimate results, or to raise farther the veil which hides from him the dreaded hostility of time to come. From this he peremptorily recoils.

This fearfully significant ejaculation, the manuscript annotator has altered into "But no more *flights!*" But the only *flights*, from which Macbeth had anything to dread, had already been successfully accomplished. None remained to fly, but helpless victims for his vengeance, at once so obviously incapable of flight, and immaterial to his graver projects, that the only chance of their escape he conceives it necessary to guard against, is the extinction of his own determination to destroy them, before he shall appoint the time for its execution:

"This deed I'll do *before this purpose cool.*"

The resolution to act, with difficulty holds its ground before the recent revelation of eventual

loss; and far from the idea of *stopping flights*, having undisturbed possession of his thoughts, he unwillingly recognizes it as staggering, whilst he speaks, before the tyrannous influence of the more dominant impression to which he by compulsion reverts:—"*But no more sights!*"

The word *but*, which commences the phrase, should alone have preserved it from the proposed mutilation; since it indicates a return to some previous subject of the speaker's apprehension, instead of a deduction or consequence of the threat that more immediately precedes it.

Another erroneous substitution is made in the following metaphor (*l.* 2079):

"He cannot buckle his distemper'd *cause*
Within the belt of rule."

That is, as a distempered body, swollen by disease, cannot be limited to its natural operations, or restricted to the dimensions prescribed as proper to health; so Macbeth's *cause* being evil, he is incapable of restraining its disordered influences within such appointed bounds, as may confine them within the compass of command. The metaphor is taken from the use of a dict-belt as a rule of regimen. The annotator writes *course*, instead of *cause*. Now the elements of a cause are defined and limited, constituting a present and completed idea. But what sense or propriety can be found in a figure which refers to *buckling a man's course*, which is future, indefinite, necessarily forward, *within a belt?* This may be coerced or impeded, but cannot be *belted*.

Exceptions have been taken to the repetition of the same sound, in the subsequent passage (*l.* 2149):

"Cleanse the *stuff'd* bosom of that perilous *stuff*
Which weighs upon the heart."

The duplication shows the idea more definitely oppressive; denoting the contemplation of the speaker to be chained to the one changeless sensation of his guilt, which enforces and holds his attention.

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